THE LETTERS OF SAINT EVREMOND

BROADWAY DIARIES MEMOIRS & LETTERS

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THE TRIUMPH OF SAINT EVREMOND

THE LETTERS OF SAINT EVREMOND

CHARLES MARGUETEL DE SAINT DENIS
SEIGNEUR DE SAINT EVREMOND

EDITED WITH AN
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
JOHN HAYWARD

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SAINT EVREMOND'S LETTERS
IS DEDICATED TO
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Wounded at the Battle of Nordlingen	Aug 3, 1645
Spends the Winter in Paris	1646–7
Dismissed by d'Enghien (Conde) for impertinence	1648
(Treaty of Westphalia, concluding the Thirty Years War)	Oct 24, 1648
(The Civil War of the *Fronde*)	1648–53
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Committed to the Bastille for offending Mazarin	1653
Serves with the Army in Flanders	1654
Retires into the Country after a duel	1656
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Accompanies Mazarin to St Jean-de-Luz for the signing of the Treaty of the Pyrenees	Nov 7, 1659
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Arrives in England	Early 1662
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(Racine's *Andromaque* and Molière's *Tartuffe*)	1667
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(The Duchesse Mazarin comes to England)	1675
(La Fontaine's *Fables* The Peace of Nimeguen)	1678
Death of Charles II Saint Evremond loses his pension	1685
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(The Duchesse de Bouillon comes to England)	1687
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(Accession of William III)	1689
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(The Treaty of Ryswick)	1697
(The Duchesse Mazarin dies at Chelsea)	June, 1699
Saint Evremond dies in London	Sept 9, 1703
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SAINT EVREMOND admits that the company of his friends and their conversation were more important to him than his writings, which occupied his time only when there was nothing better to do Like his contemporaries at the courts of Louis XIV and Charles II, he regarded literature as one of the necessary accomplishments of a person of quality, not as a means of earning money or reputation And though posterity remembers him as a man of letters, he himself claimed to be remembered as a soldier first and afterwards as a courtier For the fate of his compositions after they had left his pen he cared as little as tradition says he cared for his personal appearance in his old age He wrote, as it has been said of another, for his own and for his friends' delight and for the delight also though he could not have foreseen it, of the pirate printers They of course turned his carelessness to good account, and flourished on the proceeds of innumerable and horribly garbled impressions of his essays, exposed for sale on the bookstalls of London, Paris and Amsterdam Hitherto he has given no delight to the bibliographer and I confess that I have profited little from an examination of a very large number of those unauthorised publications At the same time my acquaintance with them, and with the one authentic edition of his collected works has not altered my belief that a selection of his writings, even in translation, is worth reading and therefore worth reprinting

Since, as we have seen, Saint Evremond cared more for the way in which he ordered his life than for the observations upon life which he committed to writing his letters retain more easily the impression of his various moods in the course of a very long life, than his more deliberate compositions In the latter he comments on a variety of subjects in literature and

history which were part of the general education of a well-bred man of his time, with the authority and charm of one who has read widely, though not very deeply, the best of the ancient and modern authors In the former, however, he expresses his thoughts and feelings on the spur of the moment, without any intention of arranging them to fit an argument or to solve a critical problem He lives again in his letters, which, though they add nothing to his reputation of a writer, nothing to the literature of the country from which he was dismissed, increase our knowledge of the time when they were written and of the people to whom they were addressed.

The anomalous position in which he was placed by the misfortune of his exile, a misfortune which was alleviated for him by the sympathy of his English friends, gives an interest to his letters in an English translation, which is denied to most translations. For the greater part of his correspondence was written while he was in England, and treats of many things which an Englishman will appreciate and understand more readily than a Frenchman; and to enjoy them a knowledge of French is not important Indeed, the numerous translations of his works which appeared in London before and after his death show that a public, larger than that which could read them in the original, was eager to learn something of the old man who had lived in London for nearly forty years.

After the middle of the eighteenth century no fresh editions of his works, either in French or in English, appeared. Voltaire spoke ill of him and he was forgotten About half-way through the last century, however, the French Academy fetched him from oblivion by selecting him as the subject for a dissertation Several unimportant essays were printed, as well as an ambitious edition of his entire works, prepared by M Charles Giraud, who unfortunately never completed his design His edition, neverthe-

less, though incomplete, and his introduction, though it deals only with Saint Evremond's life before his exile are considerable additions to the canon and criticism of Saint Evremond's writings Shortly before his death, Remy de Gourmont, a great admirer of Saint Evremond, published a selection of his essays with an introduction, while as recently as 1927, M René de Planhol issued a new and elegant edition of his incomplete works in three volumes This edition, while omitting more than Giraud's, includes several important letters, which have only come to light in the last few years No attempt however, was made to improve upon Giraud's slender commentary

Two hundred years have passed since the last, and the best edition in English appeared This was the second impression (1728), corrected and enlarged, of the first which had appeared in 1713 under the joint editorship of the two Huguenots, Des Maizeaux and Sylvestre who had used for their translation the French edition (1705) which they themselves had prepared, with Saint Evremond s approval, and in which were corrected the gross errors and omissions of the pirated texts In the same way, the English version of 1728, as Des Maizeaux explains in his preface corrects the absurdities introduced into the pirate translations Of the authority and accuracy of Des Maizeaux s editions there can be no question, neither Giraud nor Planhol could do more than follow him in the preparation of their recensions, and their commentary is substantially his

For the present edition I have selected one hundred and forty of Saint Evremond's letters Most of these were printed by Des Maizeaux in his edition of the year 1728 which is the basis of the present text The letters to d Hervart, which were not printed until many years after Saint Evremond s death in an obscure periodical, have been translated into English for the first time Several other letters, including one

to Matthew Prior which has never been printed, have not been translated before. The source of each letter has been recorded in the commentary. Apart from the silent correction of obvious mis-spellings, printer's errors and proper names, and the abolition of the long *s*, the text follows that of the 1728 edition for the letters which Des Maizeaux translated I have also followed Des Maizeaux in excluding from my translations the doggerel verses which Saint Evremond, after the fashion of his friend La Fontaine, occasionally introduced into his letters: generally speaking they are without merit, and of no interest to posterity, but in one or two instances, where such verses are intimately connected with the sense of the rest of the letter, I have ventured to reproduce them in English.

My chief concern, however, has been to provide for the first time an adequate commentary, without which the numerous allusions in the letters to contemporary affairs would remain obscure and the letters themselves uninteresting to the general reader. Des Maizeaux supplied a fair number of notes to his French and English editions, many of which have been incorporated and acknowledged in my commentary, but apart from them and a few provided by M Chaponière in his reprint of the d'Hervart letters in *La Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, none of Saint Evremond's editors, past or present, has made any attempt to supplement Des Maizeaux's modest provision My excuse for printing a commentary, which some may consider out of proportion to the length of the text, is that none of the letters is so long that it cannot be read through and remembered before reference is made to the foot of the page. In this way the reader is not in the tiresome necessity of breaking off perpetually in order to examine the notes Moreover in the commentary will be found a mass of small biographical details which add light and shade to the bare outline of Saint Evremond's life in the

Introduction The letters are arranged in chronological order, and in all but a very few cases can be dated from internal evidence, these dates are given in square brackets at the head of each letter

In conclusion I wish to express my gratitude in the first place, to M Armand Treves, who introduced me to Saint Evremond some ten years ago by inviting me to climb a ladder in Westminster Abbey to examine the inscription on his monument and who afterwards in conversation aroused in me an interest in his works which time has not diminished, to Mr C E Laurence for reading the proofs and to the Farmington Bookshop of Connecticut for the loan of an interesting contemporary manuscript collection in French of Saint Evremond's miscellaneous works, and lastly to those monuments of patience and industry, Mr Cox and Mr Manwaring of the London Library

JOHN HAYWARD

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In the preparation of the text of this edition the following editions have been used:

(1) *Oeuvres de Monsieur de Saint-Evremond Publiées sur les Manuscrits, avec la Vie de l'auteur par Mr Des Maizeaux Cinquième édition, revue, corrigée & augmentée . à Amsterdam Chez Covens & Mortier* M DCC XXXIX (1739) [The last and best of the French editions prepared by Des Maizeaux.]

(2) *The Works of Monsieur de St Evremond, Made English from the French Original by Mr Des Maizeaux, F R S.* The Second Edition, corrected and enlarged London Printed for J and J Knapton, etc M DCC XXVIII (1728)

(3) *Oeuvres mêlées de Saint-Evremond Revues, annotées et précédées d'une histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de l'auteur Par Charles Giraud Paris J Leon Techener* M DCCC LXV (1865)

(4) *Oeuvres de Saint Evremond Mises en ordre et publiées avec une introduction et des notices par René de Planhol Paris A la Cité des Livres* M DCCCC XXVII (1927)

(5) *Mélanges Curieux des Meilleures Pièces attribuées à Mr de Saint-Evremond Troisième édition* [according to Des Maizeaux, the best] *A Amsterdam Chez Covens & Mortier* M DCC XXVI (1726)

(6) *Nouvelles Oeuvres meslées de Monsieur de Saint Evremont Barbin Paris* 1700 [Preface by the Abbé Raguenet This is a pirated edition, but includes several authentic pieces which had not appeared in earlier editions *v* Commentary, p 350–1]

With the exception of No 6, these are the only authentic texts The spurious French editions, published by Barbin, who is said to have made the celebrated request to a customer *Faites-moi du Saint Evremond*, and the hackney translations in which, it is hardly necessary to say, Tom Brown had a hand, are not worth recording here For information regarding the texts of the letters which are translated for the first time in this edition, the reader is referred to the notes to those letters

INTRODUCTION

WE shall never know exactly the thoughts that were passing through the mind of the young king on that memorable and tragic August day in the year 1661, when he came over with his Court from the palace of Fontainebleau to attend Nicolas Fouquet's incomparable reception in the gardens of Vaux le Vicomte. Louis XIV, it is said, afterwards admitted that his decision to arrest Fouquet had been made before he went to Vaux, and it has even been rumoured that he considered laying hold on his host in the very act of enjoying his hospitality. But he restrained himself, and the day passed into evening and night came before the splendour and invention of the entertainment were exhausted. Again we shall never know whether Fouquet suspected anything of the King's intentions. Did he know that he was to be accused of the grossest mismanagement of the finances that he was suspected of turning to his own profit the moneys that belonged to the State, that the King had had wind of his relations with Mademoiselle de la Valliere that even so small an object as a golden sugar sifter had aroused the King's jealousy? If he knew that he was doomed he omitted nothing from his proud design of leaving life gloriously. The fountains played in innumerable basins, fireworks and girandolas shot above the solid mass of the chateau, and the blaze of set pieces illuminated for a moment the splendid company ranged along Le Notre's parterres, the statues revolving on their pedestals, the nymphs sporting in the canals down seemingly illimitable perspectives. La Fontaine afterwards describing the splendid revels to his friend Maucroix, concluded his account with a reference to the accident that befell the coach of the Queen-Mother as the guests were streaming through the forecourt on their short journey home to Fontainebleau. Was it a sign of ill omen,

a sinister warning of that disastrous calamity to come? Fouquet had made his final and prodigious effort to win back the King's affection and esteem, and he had failed. a fortnight later he was arrested at Nantes

Like a great tree that is cut down, and in falling crushes the saplings at its roots, Fouquet unwittingly involved in his disgrace many of those who had enjoyed his friendship and patronage. His immense fortune was sequestrated, his great estates and houses were seized and even his private papers, documents, letters and accounts placed in custody. And not only his own, but those of his near relations and friends Among the latter none was more faithful than Mme du Plessis-Bellière, and her devotion was rewarded by the rifling of her cabinets and portfolios, and the appropriation by the Crown of their entire contents, so eager was the King in his search for any evidence that might be brought against the unfortunate Superintendent of Finance Whatever else was found, the discovery of one harmless document that had no bearing whatsoever on Fouquet's case was to lead to the exile of one of his oldest friends. For in the course of this impertinent exploration of her private correspondence, a letter was found addressed to her nephew, the Marquis de Créqui, criticising the conduct of the Cardinal Mazarin at the Treaty of the Pyrenees. The author of that fatal letter was a certain Monsieur de Saint Evremond.

Three years before, in the autumn of 1659, he had accompanied the Cardinal on his mission to Saint Jean-de-Luz to negotiate with Don Luis de Haro a peace with Spain How much the conduct of the Cardinal on that occasion was influenced by personal interests, and how much by those of his adopted country, must be left to the historian to decide; it is a question that need not detain us here Nor indeed does it matter much whether Saint Evremond was or was not justified in carrying his criticisms as far as he

did The misfortune is that they fell into hands for which they were never intended, and thus became the cause of a disgrace which he could hardly have foreseen The exposure of that damning letter was the turning point in his life Forty five years of it had already passed when he was driven into exile and forty-two more years were to pass before it came to an end And although, as we shall see, this violent uprooting did little to alter the opinions and philosophy of a man who was never incapable of adapting himself to circumstances, it did, however, bring about a complete change in his mode of living One life ceased abruptly when he was suddenly told that a warrant had been issued for his arrest, a new one began when he turned his horse about and made for the frontier

The first life began early in the seventeenth century, not, it is true, as early as some people have supposed, but not later than the first month of the year 1616 In January of that year the parish register of Saint Denis le Guast, some furlongs from the town of Coutances, in what is now the department of Manche, records the baptism of Charles de Saint Evremond, son of Charles, Seigneur and Chatelain of Saint Denis, and of his wife Charlotte de Rouville This child descended through its mother from noble ancestors and through its father from an ancient family established in Normandy for several generations was given the additional name of de Marguetel, and inherited by right of succession the lordship of Saint Evremond sur l Oson And with these magniloquent titles, Charles de Marguetel de Saint-Denis le Guast, seigneur de Saint Evremond sur l Oson, went a fortune—a share of 10 000 livres and an income of two hundred crowns a year—sufficient for an education and upbringing worthy of their possessor

Of his early years Pierre Des Maizeaux, his friend and biographer, has left a brief account Being one

of the younger sons," he says, "he was design'd for the Gown, and as soon as he was nine years old, was sent to Paris to be bred a Scholar. He was enter'd in the second form in the College of Clermont; and continued there four years, during which he went thro' Grammar-learning and Rhetorick. He went next to the University of Caen, in order to study Philosophy, continued there only one year, and then returned to Paris, where he pursu'd the same study one year longer in the College of Harcourt. He distinguished himself no less in the Academical Exercises, than by his Studies and excell'd particularly in Fencing, insomuch that *Saint Evremond's Pass* was famous among those skill'd in the science."

When he was about sixteen years old he suddenly renounced his intention of becoming an advocate, and turning his back on the class-room and on his Jesuit instructors, entered the army as an ensign; in which position he distinguished himself so far as to be promoted in a short time to a Lieutenancy, and after the siege of Landrecy, in 1637, to the command of a company of Foot.

After the drums and tramplings of so many later and more fearful conquests, it is difficult to imagine the easy circumstances in which battles were fought and won so long ago. War then was more exciting than dangerous, and rarely attended with disastrous consequences to the combatants. At the onset of winter a truce was commonly called, and the armies retired to enjoy a vacation until the following spring. Fighting, in fact, resembled nothing so much as an expensive and dangerous form of sport, like boar-hunting. Perhaps it will always remain something of a mystery why a man decides to be a soldier, but it is certain that Saint Evremond did not join the army only because he was incapable of pursuing a better occupation, or indeed with the intention of displaying the kind of courage that all men, like animals, can show in

moments of physical distress, or with those perverted desires of trampling an enemy under foot and appropriating his property He became a soldier partly because, for a man in his social position, it was the right thing to do and would bring him into contact with the best bred men of his age, partly because, as we have said, it was an outlet for a man's sporting instincts and his physical energy Under these circumstances there is nothing extraordinary in the fact that Saint Evremond "signaliz'd himself in the Army by his Politeness and by his Wit, as much as by his Bravery," except that the charms of his conversation and company were more than usually remarkable in the distinguished society which he frequented These qualities we learn from his biographer 'gained him the esteem of the Mareschals d'Estrees and Gramont Viscount Turenne, &c, but particularly of the Comte de Moissens, since known by the name of the Mareschal d'Albret, of the Comte Pallau, afterwards Mareschal de Clerembaut, and of the Marquis de Crequi, who became also a Mareschal of France" And to this list of splendid names must be added that of the Duc d Enghien, who was afterwards to be called the Prince de Conde

At this time, Saint Evremond did not differ from any other clever young man in assuming that he knew all that there was to be known about life, he himself admits with what contempt he "look'd down upon those whom I thought ignorant of those things which I flatter'd myself I knew perfectly well And it is doubtful if he could have divested himself of this intellectual arrogance in the atmosphere of the camp where experience in all save military matters was lacking A wiser companionship than that of a few brave and aristocratic young officers was essential to the development of his talents This he was to find in Paris when as the evenings drew in the autumn campaigns were brought to an end the army was dis-

banded and turned homewards. It was on such an occasion, in his early twenties, at that critical stage when doubt was beginning to creep in among the foundations of his belief, that he made the acquaintance of Peter Gassendi. And with him he studied the philosophy of Epicurus, and of Lucretius in his *De Rerum Natura*, finally adopting that critical attitude to life upon which the scepticism of Montaigne and Charron is based. How much he owed to Gassendi, how much to his own natural inclination, are questions that cannot be decided on the little evidence we possess, but it is possible that without that meeting his mind would have developed along very different lines. For Montaigne's credit had been attacked by Descartes, and the school of philosophic doubt was not quite as fashionable as it has been. The interests of society lay in another direction, in that absurd, fantastic, but vitally important reformation of manners and taste which had been introduced by Mme. de Rambouillet and her friends In dissociating himself from the hôtel de Rambouillet Saint Evremond missed the opportunity of becoming a second Voiture in the eyes of posterity no serious loss, but he gained instead that independence of spirit which links his name with that of Montaigne and of Voltaire

There existed, however, throughout the greater part of the seventeenth century two strongholds of free-thought and *libertinage* which survived the hôtel de Rambouillet and the stormy discussions between the Jesuits and Jansenists: the *salon* of Ninon de Lanclos, and the so-called *société du Temple*. Scattered among the letters which Saint Evremond wrote from England after his exile are many references to the company that frequented those pleasant haunts Méré, the dukes of Nevers and of Bouillon, Charleval, Boisrobert, De Souvré, Chaulieu, whose hôtel Boisboudrand was a favourite meeting-place of the gour-

mets, Moliere, La Fontaine, Boileau, the musician Lulli and Bernier, the disciple of Gassendi—while through his letters to Ninon de Lanclos, in particular there runs a thread of melancholy reflection on the happiness of those days, which neither the philosophy of resignation he had learned from Gassendi, nor the distractions he afterwards enjoyed with the Duchesse Mazarin, could wholly dissipate There were times, of course, when he could sublimate his regrets in a kind of uneasy contentment, but true happiness, or rather the capacity for enjoying it had vanished For whatever may be brought up against the libertines of those days by way of reproach—and after all men like Des Barreaux are easy prey to the severe moralist—they possessed with all their faults an extraordinary genius for enjoying life, even in its petty details Before Brillat Savarin, they had made eating and drinking more than a mere satisfaction of appetite, and Saint Evremond cultivated his taste for food and wine until the last months of his life Indeed so great was his reputation in these matters that he earned, when he was a young man, a nickname which clung to him to the end of his days He and his friends the Comte d Olonne, the Marquis de Souvre and the Marquis de Boisdauphin, were christened the *coteaux* by the witty and disreputable bishop of Le Mans Lavardin, because it was said they would never drink any wine but that which was pressed from the grapes which grew on the slopes (Coteaux) of Ay Hautvillers and Ambonnay in Champagne

It was the same with love, they had refined it to something worthier than it had ever been in the reign of Henry IV and in the pages of Brantome, and yet had refrained from making it a mere exchange of courtly and far fetched sentiments, which it had become under the influence of the hotel de Rambouillet In the relations of the men and women who met in Ninon s house in the rue des Tournelles

and at the Duc de Bouillon's on the quai Malaquais, love came to be regarded as an exquisite pleasure, to be enjoyed as much by the body as the mind, a pleasure that was pursued by their grandchildren in the eighteenth century, and described with infinite charm and understanding by such writers as Diderot, Crebillon and Laclos. Saint Evremond, it is said, was one of the earliest of Ninon de Lanclos' lovers and the first, and perhaps the wisest, of her tutors in the neo-epicurean school. It has also been suggested by that old gossip, Bussy Rabutin, that he was for a time the lover of the Comtesse d'Olonne, although neither of these affairs can be substantiated. Indeed nothing is known of Saint Evremond's passionate experiences during his military vacations A few letters remain, it is true the earliest which he is known to have written and they are addressed to women who remain anonymous and in any case tell us nothing about them or about himself. In fact one is tempted to suppose that he was one of those men who are incapable, for some subtle psychological or perhaps physiological reason, of enjoying a passionate love-affair, but who nevertheless remain, all through their lives, devoted admirers and obedient servants of several women In this respect Saint Evremond had something in common with Locke and with Voltaire. Even if he enjoyed Ninon's favours there was something he preferred to them, and that was the privilege of introducing them to others. For having once instructed his pupil in the way of pleasure and impressed upon her the importance of living in the present without either regretting the past or considering the future, he was content to watch her carrying out his instructions, forbidding any movement of jealousy to disturb an attachment which, if it fell short of love, was still more than a simple friendship.

When he returned to the duties of his profession, he carried with him not only the memory of those

delightful winter afternoons and evenings but some of those who had shared them with him After the day's work was done, he would meet again in the security of his tent the men he had met at Ninon's house and at the Marquise de Sablé's, and would continue with them the conversations and the character making debates as if no interruption had happened, forgetting for a night the dreariness and monotony of the Flanders campaign, to imagine himself once more in the Parish of Saint-Roch, listening to the animated voices of those he loved

It was after the siege of Arras in 1640 that Saint Evremond became acquainted in this way with the young Duc d Enghien, who to show how much he valued his company made him a lieutenant in his regiment of Guards His conversation, it seems, had a peculiar attraction for this brilliant commander, who was as ready to listen to an account of the writers of antiquity as to laugh at some elegant turn of irony, even when it was at the expense of his own friends Thus in the intervals of rather aimless campaigns, Saint Evremond did not lose any opportunity of cultivating his mind by reading his favourite authors, and by sharpening his wits on the follies of his contemporaries

Soon after the battle of Rocroi, it became known that he was the author of a satirical comedy, ridiculing the recently formed French Academy, an insipid piece of work, which was never acted, although it was frequently printed even during its author s lifetime, in hopelessly inaccurate versions, indeed its only claim to remembrance arises from its being the first of a long line of gibes at that unlucky institution After two more years' uneventful service in the army he was so seriously wounded as to be fortunate to escape with his life "At the battle of Nordlingen,' according to Des Maizeaux, "being ordered to head a squadron, and post himself below an eminence

which was possess'd by the Enemy, he was there exposed for three hours together to all the fire of their small shot, and a battery of four field-pieces; insomuch that he lost there most of his men, and he was himself wounded in the left knee by a shot from a Falcon. His wound was thought so dangerous, that for six weeks he was believed to be past recovery: however, the skill of his surgeons, and his good constitution, contributed equally to his cure."

A year or two after his recovery, he sustained a blow of a different kind, from no other weapon than his own irony. His love of mockery which he had been able to satisfy at home and in the field suddenly involved him in an unexpected misfortune. He committed the fatal indiscretion of making fun of the Prince de Condé behind his back, by turning to ridicule the prince's passion for ridiculing others He might have foreseen the danger, but he took no steps to avoid it; Condé was informed as a matter of course, and Saint Evremond was compelled to resign his commission The loss, at one fell swoop, not only of a coveted rank, but also of a friend and patron, might have been far more difficult to remedy if the war had been prolonged. But the struggle which had already lasted thirty long and weary years was finally concluded by the Treaty of Westphalia and Saint Evremond was free to return home. Very soon, however, France was involved in a domestic crisis the first of the civil risings, known as the Fronde. Condé declared against the Court party and left the country, Saint Evremond went home to Normandy for a holiday While he was there the absurd behaviour of the Frondeurs provided him with unexampled opportunities for exercising his talents as a satirist and, in spite of his recent disgrace, he did not fail to make use of them. The Duc de Longueville, having declared against the Cardinal Mazarin, had retired into Normandy, where he

enjoyed the almost absolute power of a great feudal lord There he gathered about him as many of the Nobility as he could tempt with offers of command in his army and did his best to persuade Saint Ebremond—as he was called in Normandy—to accept the command of the Artillery But Saint Ebremond, a wily Norman, realised that he would lose more by dissociating himself from the powerful alliance of the Court party than he would gain by accepting office in a gang of disorderly rebels His reply therefore, to the Duc de Longueville's invitation was a lively satire, entitled *The Duc de Longueville's Retreat to his Government of Normandy*, in which he explained with brilliant irony his reasons for declining it He was not disappointed in the hope of its strengthening his position at Court, and it is said that Mazarin was so delighted with it that he invited Saint Evremond to read it aloud to him during his last illness

A year later, exactly half-way through the seventeenth century he was given another opportunity of this kind, while proceeding with the Duc de Candale towards Havre de Grace to arrest the Duchesse de Longueville, who, after the imprisonment of her husband, along with Conde was carrying on the campaign Some time after, he committed to writing the conversations he had held with Candale during the journey describing in the style which was then exceedingly popular in the salons of such women as the Marquise de Sable and Mlle de Scudery, the characters of the courtiers with whom he was intimately acquainted When these absurd domestic disputes had lasted for another two years, Saint Evremond's faithful attachment to the Court attracted the attention of the young king who expressed his gratitude by creating him a Mareschal de Camp and a day later the 17th of September 1652, by according him a pension of 3 000 livres a year But neither

these favours nor the royal protection were sufficient to keep him safe from the malignity of the Cardinal Mazarin, who was still enjoying, under the nominal regency of the Queen-Mother, Anne of Austria, an absolute freedom of government. Saint Evremond's reputation as a wit was indeed a mixed blessing; with such a gift for making things seem ridiculous one had to be careful and, as we have seen, Saint Evremond had already been careless once, with unfortunate consequences He was careless again, about a year after he had been given his new commission, and punished by confinement to the Bastille for three months On this occasion, it is true, as the Cardinal was afterwards pleased to admit, Saint Evremond was no more guilty than his friend Candale and many others in coming to terms with the Frondeurs in Guyenne without previously consulting the Cardinal But the latter, who lived in a perpetual panic that amounted almost to a persecution mania, suspected his subordinates of impertinence and of jesting at the ease with which they had concluded an agreement over his head. Saint Evremond was a very plausible scapegoat, and was made to bear the heavy burden of imaginary sins; an injustice which was hardly remedied when he was released, by the Cardinal's confession · "That he was persuaded of his innocence, but that a man in his station was obliged to hearken to so many reports, that it was very difficult for him to distinguish truth from falsehood, and not to do an injury, sometimes, to an honest man"

About this time the troubles created by the Fronde came to an end, the authority of the King and of his chief minister was again supreme, and Saint Evremond, after leaving the Bastille, returned once more to Flanders, where France was in arms against Spain On that eternal battlefield of Western Europe he picked up again the threads of the old life which he

had enjoyed before the civil war had intervened There the old discussions were renewed books were opened, new dishes were invented in the intervals of a little mild skirmishing and when winter approached the intimacy of the camp was exchanged for the intimacy of the capital

In 1657 Saint Evremond was again in trouble This time he was foolish enough to allow the story of a duel he had fought with the Marquis de Fore to come to the ears of the King who was determined to put a stop to that dangerous custom with the result that he was compelled to disappear for a discreet interval and rusticate on his estates in Normandy While he was absent from Court he had occasion to compose one of the most charming and characteristic of his essays which he sent as a letter to his friend the Comte d Olonne, in which he discusses under the general title of Pleasures, the epicurean doctrine of happiness It is an important document for the right understanding of Saint Evremond's attitude to life, for the opinions he advances in it were those to which he steadfastly adhered when he was banished from his country for good and all ' If a man intends to live happy ' he says, " he must make but few reflections upon life ' , and again, ' the principal end for which Wisdom was given us was to direct us in the enjoyment of our Pleasures ' Happiness, he maintained does not consist in any one particular kind of enjoyment, but in an exquisite state of mind produced by adjusting oneself to present circumstances, without reference to the past without fear for the future not so much by seeking for pleasure as by knowing how to avoid pain , in fact the knowledge, formed by experience, of how far it is wise to indulge one s tastes without impairing their capacity for future enjoyment And he concludes with the strange and rather melancholy conclusion that ' This is the utmost of what the

Philosophy of Epicurus and Aristippus can afford to their followers . but true Christians, far more happy by the purity of the Precepts of the Gospel, will taste the sweets of an innocent Life, which will be still attended by a greater felicity." Saint Evremond was not blind to the happiness of those who believe, in his later years he professed, though he did not practise, the Catholic Faith, but he knew that it was neither in his nature to wish, nor in his power to command, a full belief And since he would not believe that such a thing as another life was possible, and since he knew that life, like everything else, must one day come to an end, and that that end would be final, he did not fear death. From Montaigne, whose essays had made a large part of his education, he had learned while he was young to look upon death as a matter of course, and by a frequent acquaintance with it to accept it dispassionately as a happy issue from affliction And it was as well that he had, for otherwise he might not have survived as calmly as he did to the end of his inordinately long life the loss of all his friends and contemporaries The first of these occurred in the year following his return to Court In 1658 the young Duc de Candale, who was hardly twenty-seven years old, died at Lyons, from a fever which is said to have been connected in some way with his passion for Madame de Castellane

Meanwhile Saint Evremond had rejoined the army and was with it when, at the beginning of May 1659, a general truce was called, preparatory to a treaty of peace being signed between France and Spain. At that critical moment no one, least of all Saint Evremond, could have divined the changes that were destined to take place in France in the next three years. Within that short space of time Mazarin died, the King, married to a Spanish princess, assumed absolute power, and Saint Evremond, flying for his life, was to find a refuge in Holland.

Fouquet, whose administration of the country's finances during the Regency had won a grudging approval from Mazarin, that was afterwards to become a sinister condemnation may have foreseen the calamity that sooner or later was bound to overtake him, when the king was of an age to manage his own affairs Little did Saint Evremond suspect that he too was to be involved in Fouquet's disastrous fall For the third and last time he was to reap the fatal consequences of his mocking irony

The armistice continued until the late autumn, when Mazarin, accompanied by Saint Evremond, set out in very magnificent array for the Spanish frontier, where the signatories to the Treaty of the Pyrenees had agreed to meet At Saint Jean de Luz peace was concluded between France and Spain and fortified by the royal engagement of Louis XIV to the daughter of Philippe IV Saint Evremond, commenting on the situation in a letter to his friend François de Crequi asserted with more than his usual irony that the Cardinal had acted entirely to his own personal advantage in bringing the war to an end, and that in so doing he had allowed France to sacrifice whatever benefit she might have had from defeating Spain in the field by allowing her enemy to have a share in drawing up the terms of the peace At the back of his mind perhaps was a feeling of irritation, shared by his fellow officers that there was to be no more *boar hunting* no more of that kind of agreeable club life to which women were not admitted, and which provided such a pleasant contrast to the voluptuous amusements of Paris

Fortunately for Saint Evremond, he had not to wait very many months before he was sent on another mission, to congratulate Charles II on his restoration to the English throne In that splendid progress in the train of the Comte de Soissons he was easily made to forget any disappointment arising out of the

Spanish treaty, and he was soon involved in a hundred new friendships at Whitehall, which, he did not realize then, were to become his chief solace in the long years of his exile.

Having witnessed the happy restoration of the English Monarchy, Saint Evremond, after some six months' delay, returned to France for the last time. Mazarin was dying, Fouquet, confident that he was to become the Cardinal's successor, was devoting more and more of his time to the superintendence of his estates, and to the fulfilment of his grandiose schemes of building and patronage, curiously blind to the danger of rivalling the king in such things as wealth and power. For Louis XIV, now come of age and married, had endured long enough the intrigues and counter-intrigues of the Queen-Mother and Mazarin, was weary of the incessant wranglings of the nobility and their endeavours to maintain their antiquated feudal rights, and was determined to reserve for himself an absolute authority in affairs of State. So long as Fouquet was in control of the Treasury, so long would he remain an obstacle in the path of the king's ambitions. To displace him was only a question of time and of a suitable opportunity. Fouquet, however, still persevered in his intention of winning over his sovereign. Demanding almost inconceivable efforts from his architects and masons, from a small army of painters, sculptors and other domestic craftsmen, he directed the final embellishment of his superb palace for the reception of the king and his whole court. The work was continued until the last minute and then, as if by magic, all traces of those feverish preparations vanished. The sequel to Fouquet's last, splendid, useless gesture was, as we have already seen, his arrest on the 5th of September 1661.

Saint Evremond, it seems, had no knowledge of what was happening. When his friend was arrested,

he was returning from a visit to the Mareschal de Clerembaut in the country and indeed was half the way back to Paris when another of Fouquet's friends met him in the forest of Orleans, and informed him of the discovery by Tellier and Colbert of the injudicious letter he had written three years before The king who had been told of its contents, and of the author's intimacy with Fouquet ordered Saint Evremond to be committed to the Bastille [1] M de Gourville, the bearer of the fatal news in the forest, advised Saint Evremond to retire to his estates in Normandy Saint Evremond who knew from previous experience the horror of the Bastille, did as he was told and 'After having lain hid there for some time, he advanced privately to the frontiers of the Kingdom, and at last resolved to go to Holland where he arrived about the end of the year 1661

"Verily" says Des Maizeaux, 'he was too hardly dealt with for when he wrote that letter he spoke

[1] Saint Evremond's biographers have overlooked two poems printed under his name in *Pièces intéressantes et peu connues pour servir à l'histoire et à la littérature par M D L P* [*M (Pierre) De La Place*] *Tome Cinquième* 161–2 *à Bruxelles* 1737 If they are authentic it is certain that they aggravated his offence and if widely circulated as they probably were would be less easily forgotten than the letter

SUR LOUIS XIV ET SES MINISTRES

PAR SAINT EVREMONT

Avec un Pilote si sage
Et de si mauvais Matelots
Le vaisseau fera t il naufrage?
Vaincra t il les vents et les flots?

Quant à moi pour parler sans feindre
Je ne sais plus qu'en augurer
Les Matelots me font tout craindre
Le Pilote tout espérer

Ces vers ne se trouvent dans aucune edition de cet auteur bien moins encore les suivans qu'il se permis dans un moment d'humeur contre le Monarque qui ne furent connus que de peu de gens et qui Louis

to his Friend with the same freedom as he would have done in a private conversation; nor could it ever enter his thoughts that his Letter would become Publick. On the other hand, having preserved a resentment against the Cardinal, ever since his Eminence had caused him to be imprisoned in the Bastille, it is not to be wondered that he did not spare him on this occasion. If we add to these considerations, that the Letter in the main was solid and judicious, it will undoubtedly be agreed, that they ought not to have dealt so with a Gentleman of distinction, who had ever well-served his Prince, and whose only Crime was, his being over-zealous for the Honour of his Country, and too well acquainted with its true interest. 'Tis certain that Saint Evremond never own'd that he had committed a fault, or that he had a wrong notion of that Treaty."

XIV n'ayant pu les lui pardonner, rendirent si long son exil en Angleterre, car sa Lettre critique a M de Créqui, sur le Traité des Pyrenées, n'en fut (dit-on) que le prétexte

SONNET SUR LES ROIS

Ce peuple qu'autrefois Dieu gouvernoit lui-même,
Lasse de son bonheur voulut avoir un Roi
Eh bien, dit le Seigneur, Peuple ingrat et sans foi,
Tu sentiras bientôt le joug du diadême

Celui que je mettrai dans ce degré suprême,
Comme un cruel vautour viendra fondre sur toi,
Ses seules volontés te serviront de loi,
Sans pouvoir assouvir son avarice extrême

Toujours il cherchera mille et mille moyens
De te ravir l'honneur, la liberté, les biens
En vain tu te plaindras du poids de sa puissance

Ce peuple en vit l'effet, il en fut consterné,
Ainsi règne aujourd'hui, par les voeux de la France,
Ce monarque absolu, qu'on nomme Dieu-donné!

Par le Même

From this time, Saint Evremond entered, as it were, upon a new existence, his campaigning days were over, and he was never again to enliven with his graceful conversation and the ingenious sallies of his wit the inhabitants of the Parish of Saint-Roch Henceforward, we shall come to know him better and more intimately from his letters, for in his old life all our knowledge of him amounted to little more than the vague and elusive appearances he makes in the pages of his biographer, and in a few contemporary memoirs and anecdotes

Nothing is known of his movements, or of the hardships which he must have endured during his flight It is certainly improbable that he was able to carry away with him more than a bare minimum of luggage and as for money he was entirely dependent on his own resources the moment he was deprived of his royal pension His patrimony, it seems, was in some way tied up with his estates in Normandy, and therefore unavailable to him and if it had not been for some investments which Fouquet had profitably arranged for him during the campaign in Guyenne, he must have been in a desperate strait Somehow or other these remained intact and were handed over to Crequi who in exchange paid to Saint Evremond an annuity of 200 crowns which remained until the end of his life his only regular source of income But even so without the assistance of friends he was scarcely able to provide for his needs In Holland the refuge of so many political exiles, he knew nobody well enough to offer him help One hope remained that in England, where but a year before he had been received with open arms he would be welcomed again And yet even that prospect was uncertain if he happened to remember some of the pungent aphorisms his friend La Rochefoucauld had produced at Mme de Sables on the inconstancy of friends in times of trouble But it was easier to

listen to such reflections, and even to believe in them at Paris than at the Hague, Saint Evremond did not hesitate, and after a short interval sailed for England.

As soon as he arrived, his expectations were more than realized, he found himself surrounded by friends, and solicited by many others who were eager to make his acquaintance. They too had endured the melancholy and the vicissitudes of exile before the Restoration, and had consoled themselves with a share of the exquisite and polite pleasures of the French Court These they did not forget at their return and endeavoured, with only a moderate success it is true, to transplant in English soil If they failed, it was not for lack of enthusiasm; everywhere French fashions prevailed, in food, in dress, in manners and in language, along with all those elegant and absurd kickshaws, which are described so vividly and with such vivacious irony in the comedies of Sedley and Etherege Not only was Saint Evremond welcome because he knew how to manage these things, but also because it was hoped that he might instruct others to use them, and to use them properly His age, moreover, was an advantage to him, he could speak and act from experience And although he was still young at forty-five he was old enough to be the father of a very youthful Court, a position which he gracefully assumed "The Dukes of Buckingham and Ormond, the Earls of Saint Albans and Arlington, my Lord d'Aubigny and my Lord Crofts were his best friends," and to complete the list of the men and women he frequented in his early days at Whitehall we need only turn to Hamilton's celebrated memoirs of his brother-in-law, the Comte de Gramont The latter, whom Saint Evremond had known in France, was shortly to appear in England for a short spell of exile, until Louis XIV had forgotten his ill-advised intrigue with Mlle. de la Mothe Houdancourt

The visit of this gay and unscrupulous philanderer

coincided, as Hamilton relates, with the brightest of those short lived hours of happiness which the Court enjoyed before disillusionment began to creep in before the mismanagement of affairs of state became a fruitful subject for invective and lampoon His appreciation and knowledge of fine cookery, qualities which Saint Evremond set above most others, caused him to be sought after no less as a host than as a guest At his own supper parties, Hamilton tells us that the company 'was not numerous, but it was choice All that was most distinguished at Court was generally there and the one man whose society on these occasions, suited the chevalier de Gramont best, was never absent—the celebrated Saint Evremond' "Both of them,' he continues 'possessed all that an experience of the great world, and the frequentation of polite society could add to natures in them selves well endowed Saint Evremond who was less occupied in frivolous concerns, from time to time gave the chevalier de Gramont little lectures, and by making reflections on his past, tried to improve his present conduct or to prepare him for his conduct in the future"

From his distaste for the frivolous and often brawling amusements of the Court and his preference for conversation he came to be known—the nickname was invented by Gramont—as The Philosopher', as a boy he had been called 'The Wit for the same reason He loved repose always putting the calm of reflection and conversation before the excitements of action, his philosophy had taught him to do nothing however pleasant it might be at the time which he might afterwards live to regret And he knew that men like Lord Rochester and the Duke of Buckingham were constantly regretting their follies At the same time he was not blind to the charm and enthusiasm of such men when they were not engaged in some wild prank or drunken orgy and

although he did not share with them their passion for scientific experiments, no one was more ready than he was to discuss the merits of the latest play or to listen to a new piece of music, "Old Evremond," says Spence, "would talk for ever." His friendship with Buckingham, who was a powerful, if somewhat whimsical, patron of art and letters, brought him into contact with the poets and the men of letters, as well as with that eager company of scholars and antiquaries whose names are familiar to the reader of Evelyn's *Diary*. From Sir Kenelm Digby he heard of Descartes' latest theories, with Hobbes he discussed deism and atheism, with Waller and Cowley he wandered freely in the Garden of Epicurus, and it is probable that he debated with Sedley and Howard, perhaps with Dryden himself, the respective merits of the French and English stage. Des Maizeaux tells us that the Duke of Buckingham, Lord d'Aubigny and Saint Evremond "were together almost every day, and their conversation was often upon Theatrical performances," so much so that they all collaborated in the writing of a very insipid comedy entitled *Sir Politick Would-Be*, which passed unnoticed in England, and in France was regarded as nonsensical. Saint Evremond, however, gained by the knowledge that he lacked the skill of a playwright, a thorough understanding of the difficulties of the art, and it was this, together with the translations of English plays that Buckingham and d'Aubigny made for him for it must be remembered that he never troubled to learn English that enabled him a few years later to compose, among other studies of the stage, his *Observations on the English Comedy*.

"He was thus alleviating the sorrows of his Disgrace," says Des Maizeaux, "when he was seized with vapours that cast him into a sort of melancholy, and weakened him very much. The Physicians told him that nothing but the change of air could cure

him and that if he could not go to Montpelier, he would do well, however to cross the sea, and stay some time in Holland He closed more easily with this advice, because they then began to be sensible at London of that infectious air, which soon occasioned the most destructive plague that ever raged in England"

In the early part of the year 1665, therefore he returned to the Hague 'After having lived in the constraint of Courts," he wrote to the faithful Crequi soon after his arrival "I take up with the comfort of ending my days in the freedom of a Commonwealth, where if nothing is to be hoped for, there's at least nothing to be feared" Certainly there was no hope that among the plump and stupid citizens of the Hague he would enjoy, as he had in London the intense yet always precarious pleasures of the Court, instead of the Comte de Gramont s supper parties, he had to console himself with an occasional game of cards or chess at the Portuguese Ambassador's, and with a round of very formal visits He was not without friends, however Through Sir William Temple the English Ambassador, he became acquainted with the young Prince of Orange and his circle—a valuable connection in after years when that prince became King of England—and with the foreign ministers and envoys to the States General Among these was the young Comte de Lionne nephew of the Marquis de Lionne, Louis XIV's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs who neglected nothing in his efforts to obtain a pardon for Saint Evremond although as Saint Evremond s letters show they were never rewarded with success

In Holland the days passed with the monotonous regularity of a great clock the seasons came and went by almost unperceived but Saint Evremond was recovering his health and increasing his acquaintance and before very long his presence was essential to the

success of any reception given in honour of distinguished strangers The Prince of Tuscany invited him to make use of his house, the Rhinegrave of his delicate table, and M. d'Hervart, the wealthy Parisian banker, while he was stopping at the Hague offered him the protection and hospitality which he had already given to the poet La Fontaine in France. D'Hervart's knowledge of finance, moreover, enabled Saint Evremond to recover part of the loan he had made before his exile to Ninon de Lanclos and to that hopeless spendthrift d'Elbène, a negotiation that had the unhappy effect of producing a temporary ill-feeling between him and his "Leontium"

Fortunately the company of men of the world did not prevent Saint Evremond from cultivating that of men of learning, he held many long and animated conversations with Isaac Vossius, whom he was to meet again when he returned to England, and was introduced to Spinoza, Heinsius and de Sluse, "so famous for his great knowledge of the Law, and the Mathematicks." The latter he had met at Liège during a short tour of Flanders taken in 1667 to console himself for the sudden and very grievous loss of d'Aubigny, who had arranged to take part in the excursion, but had been prevented by his tragic death only a few hours after receiving the Cardinal's cap. On his return to the Hague, the atmosphere being favourable, as well as the absence of any regular distractions, Saint Evremond amused himself with his pen At that time two subjects, in particular, held his attention: the quarrel that had arisen in France between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, and the lively discussions that were taking place between the partisans of the Ancients and the Moderns. In matters of religion, as in politics, he had no axe to grind, in both he preserved an impartial attitude, reserving the right to introduce into his analysis of the dispute his natural scepticism, and into his exposition of it a touch of his

familiar irony But in the literary debate he was far more inclined to take sides On the whole his sympathies were with the Moderns, in spite of his genuine love of the classics, though he would never condemn the latter to appraise the former In both literatures the old and the new, he discovered their several merits, upholding the traditions of the one and admiring the innovations of the other And while maintaining on the whole a conservative attitude towards changes which had occurred in his own lifetime in particular those which affected the stage, he was ready to commend with perfect fairness the original genius of Racine without ceasing to regard Corneille, the hero of his youth, as the better dramatist

Several short essays, written about this time, in particular his *Judgment* on Racine s 'Alexandre", and his *Observations on Sallust and Tacitus*, are fair examples of his skill as a critic and illustrate his personal predilections Generally speaking, his taste in literature, as well as his conception of society are those of a man who had passed his youth in that formative period of French life and letters under the regency of Anne of Austria, and like Ninon de Lanclos who survived his death in the early years of the eighteenth century by two years, he conserved the spirit of that age long after it had passed away After his exile he found other and new interests in life, but they had little influence on his attitude of mind, which was as it were the crystallization of the thoughts and feelings he had experienced before he was expelled from France

At the Hague according to his remarks in more than one letter written while he was there, on the obtuseness and the absence of culture of its inhabitants he had no cause to alter his opinions of the value of the society in which he had been brought up And since it seems that he had no intention of leaving Holland, the recollection of it enabled him to live with more

happiness and less regret than he might otherwise have done. Only if he had allowed his thoughts to travel less remotely into the past, would he have remembered that other society across the sea upon which he had made but a few years before so favourable an impression

For England had not forgotten him In the spring of 1670, the English Ambassador at the Hague handed him a dispatch from his friend Lord Arlington requesting him to consider Charles II's wish that he should return to London, and announcing the King's intention of offering him a pension, if he accepted the invitation. Saint Evremond did not decline an offer which was more profitable and more sympathetic than any he was ever likely to receive in Holland, and set sail without delay Soon after his arrival the promise of a pension was fulfilled and he was appointed to the easiest of all sinecures, the Keepership of the Ducks in the Decoy in Saint James's Park, with a salary of three hundred pounds a year.

For the next five years, as his letters show, he was largely occupied with various compositions in the intervals of dining with the king and his new mistress, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and of passing on some of the advice he had formerly given to the Comte de Gramont to his friend the Duke of Buckingham In these early days in England his interests turned to an examination of French literature, upon which he wrote several short essays, discussing in particular the merits of its tragedy and comedy, its histories and translations. At the same time he revised his longest and most sustained work: *Reflections upon the different Genius of the Roman People*, by which he is best remembered, and by right of which he is entitled to be regarded as the forerunner of Montesquieu. He also found time to reply to Créqui's ingenious request for an account of *The Temper of my Mind, and my Thoughts of all Things in my Old Age* "Of all the works of

M de Saint Evremond" says Des Maizeaux, 'there is none in which he has painted himself more to the life than in this It shows him at one view a Courtier, a Man of Letters a Philosopher a Divine, it discovers a fine Genius, a delicate Taste, and a nice Discernment"

Yet it seems that with all his friends, with all the various and frivolous amusements of Whitehall, the skating parties in the winter and the firework displays on fine summer evenings, that even with his reputation, which was established in France in spite of his disgrace and was increasing in England, Saint Evremond was not altogether happy "England was not Saint Evremond's Country, and notwithstanding the Civilities he received from all hands he did not forget France' In a sense he was a lonely man he could not speak a word of English though he tried to introduce into his verses the everlasting 'puddings' and 'plum porridge' which he was forced to eat, and the climate did not suit him But he did not repine under his misfortune, for his philosophy had taught him to accept the ill with the good and he had learnt to suffer the petty vexations of life, the unkindly jeers which Sorbiere tells us were directed against foreigners the miseries of indigestion along with the deeper sorrows of exile, with resignation and good humour What he needed more than anything was some one or something to remind him constantly of the people and the country from which he was separated his sensitive and confiding nature demanded the intimacy of human relations which was denied him, not only by the mere inhibition of language but also by the very circumstances of his life Such a love as that of Dorothy Osborne for Sir William Temple might exist beyond the boundaries of Whitehall it could never have survived within Faithlessness was the ruling passion there Lord Rochester had said as much and what Lord Rochester

said was usually a fair indication of what the Court felt.

Then talk not of Inconstancy,
False hearts or broken vows,
If I by Miracle can be
This live-long minute true to Thee
'Tis all that Heaven allows

And Saint Evremond was beyond caring perhaps he never had cared overmuch for a succession of easily enjoyed, easily forgotten love-affairs

Suddenly and unexpectedly, however, something happened to alter all this as far as he was concerned. Hortensia Mancini, the very beautiful, very disreputable, very vagabond Duchesse Mazarin, who had been married by the Cardinal, her uncle, to the grovelling, bigoted and superstitious Duc de la Meilleraye, whom she had deserted, arrived in England after having roamed round France and Italy pursued by her husband's creatures In England at last she was safe from her pursuers, for she had hardly reached London before the news of her extraordinary escapades had reached the ears of the Court, always greedy for novelties Before long she was established in a house in Saint James's Park, belonging to the Duke of York, and soon afterwards was sharing, under rather different circumstances from those which had once been suggested to her uncle before the Restoration, the pleasures and privileges of the Royal bed-chamber, and this very naturally to the great alarm and jealousy of the indomitable duchesses of Portsmouth and Cleveland

But the king had made up his mind for the time being, the new duchess was established, and neither the sarcastic comments of the old ones, nor the subtle diplomacy of Louis XIV, who was particularly anxious not to lose, with the Duchess of Portsmouth, his hold over Charles II, were to alter his intention of keeping Hortensia Mancini as his mistress

Saint Evremond was an old man—he was nearly sixty—when the Duchesse Mazarin, still young and beautiful, came into his life In years he was old enough to be her father but in his heart, which was still young he felt her charms to be something more than those of a daughter At first he found in her what he had looked for in vain since his banishment a link with his country and so a link with the past, a symbol of what he loved best Later he was to find in her the satisfaction of that desire for intimacy which he could not establish at Court There was no passion on her side, little, if any, on his he was happy to admire she to be admired And while it is impossible to overlook signs of dotage in this belated affection, the fact remains that, in making Saint Evremond contented and even happy it emphasized some of his most charming qualities, and called forth in his letters many revealing confessions and delicate turns of wit

The Duchess, to be sure had no illusions about her servant she made use of him For her position even as a royal mistress was none too secure, she was always needing money and clothes and Saint Evremond was often called upon to supply these out of his meagre purse In return she would supply him with table linen for his parties with an occasional gift for his store cupboard and on very special occasions when he had trudged half way round the town to fulfil some fantastic commission, with the lightest and most evanescent of kisses By incessant flattery he managed to control her temper and his craving for affection made him overlook her outbursts of selfish passion, her reckless extravagance, and even her almost pathological desire for cleanliness, —a thing he could never understand

But the 'Knight of the Dismal Countenance' as he signed himself in his letters to 'Dulcinea'— adopting for himself and for his lady the titles of his

beloved *Don Quixote* was happy, happier than he had been since the days when he sat with Ninon de Lanclos and her epicurean assembly in the rue des Tournelles. For in Madame Mazarin's house something of the old spirit was revived. "All manner of subjects were discoursed upon there, as Philosophy, History, Pieces of Wit and Gallantry, Plays, Authors ancient and modern, the niceties of the French Tongue, &c", and these ingenious conversations, continues Des Maizeaux, "gave M. de Saint Evremond occasion to write some pieces, such as his Defence of some Plays of M. Corneille, his Reflections on the French, Spanish, Italian, and English Comedies, and on Operas. . ."

The latter had been introduced into England from France at this time, and were to provide a splendid exercise for Saint Evremond's habitual irony. His love of music, one of the rare things he had in common with the Duchesse Mazarin, was too refined to allow him to see anything but a grotesque confusion in the wedding of words and notes in the most ordinary and unpoetical actions. His long letter to the Duke of Buckingham perfectly expresses his sentiments in the matter, and his own satirical comedy *Les Opéras* has something of the gaiety of Grey's burlesques, in its turning into ridicule the singing of pedestrian themes. Indeed, in its early days in England opera was a complete failure. On Wednesday evening the 29th of May, 1677, for instance, we learn from a letter preserved in the Verney collection, "was some gallantry at Whitehall, where was acted a French Opera, but most pitifully done, so ill that the King was weary on't, and some say it was not well contrived to entertain the English Gentry, who came that night to honour their King, with a lamentable ill-acted French Play."

"Consorts of musick" in the chamber were another matter. No one threw himself with a greater en-

thusiasm into the collecting of performers, the copying of parts and the arrangements of rehearsals than Saint Evremond From France he obtained the latest pieces from the elegant pens of Lulli and Chambonnières and commanded the services of any Italian or French musicians who happened to be passing through London Nor did he neglect to practise his own skill as a composer and performer instructing others as he had once instructed Ninon, in the management of the lute and arranging a variety of combinations of stringed and wind instruments with voices for the delight of his Duchess and her guests

When music failed there was always the card table at which the Duchess would sit far into the night devouring her own and other people's substance playing brilliantly, and sometimes cheating with consummate skill M Morin had introduced the new game of basset from France and all other games had been discarded in its favour Poor Saint Evremond lost consistently chiefly it seems at his hostess s command, and for the privilege of sitting at her table was reduced to the pathetic condition of one who is never taken quite seriously, and who must be ready at any moment to stand as a butt for the amusement and scorn of others His appearance, moreover was against him A curious wen had begun to grow between his eyebrows, instead of a wig he carried his own grey and tousled locks which sprouted untidily from under a kind of smoking cap he was growing old and careless about himself There was a song about him which ran

Old Evremond renowned for Wit and Dirt
Would change his living oftener than his Shirt
Roar with the Rakes of State a month then come
To flarte another in his hole at home !

What a strange and untidy hole it must have been ! ' In the latter part of his life according to Spence,

"he used always to be feeding his ducks, or the fowls he kept in his chamber He had a great variety of these, and other sorts of animals, all over his house He used always to say, 'that when we grow old, and our own spirits decay, it reanimates one to have a number of living creatures about one, and to be much with them!'"

The death of Charles II in 1685 left Saint Evremond in very straitened circumstances, the company of his monkeys and birds, cards, music, conversation, country visits nothing could console him for the loss of his pension Madame Mazarin's condition was even more desperate, and life would have been a very melancholy affair for the two exiles if James II had not remembered them Even so, Saint Evremond made another urgent appeal to his friends in France for the remission of his sentence, but was again refused The sympathy of the English Court, however, was still on his side "In the year 1686 the Earl of Sunderland propos'd to King James to create for M de Saint Evremond a Place of Secretary of the Cabinet, whose province should be to write the King's private Letters to the foreign Princes The King approv'd my Lord Sunderland's motion but Saint Evremond thought it did not become him to accept such an office However, he told that prime Minister that he was very much obliged to him for his kindness, and desired him, withal, to return the King his humble thanks for the honour he intended him adding, he should be very happy to serve his Majesty, but that a man of his age ought to think of nothing, but how to husband the little time he had to live, and to spend it in ease and tranquillity"

Soon, however, new interests and distractions presented themselves Bernier arrived in England, with news of the still surviving members of Ninon's circle; and after him came the Duchesse de Bouillon, Madame

Mazarin's sister, to tell the sad story of La Fontaine's madness which made it impossible that he should pay a visit to England, as everyone had hoped he would. Finally there came the Protestant refugees. After the disastrous revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had given toleration to the Protestant faith in France for nearly a hundred years, they fled of their own accord or were driven by their persecutors across the English Channel, landing at Greenwich, homeless and unprovided for, but eager to build up again the industries which they had left behind in France. The untiring efforts of their protector, the Marquis de Ruvigny, and of his son, who was afterwards created Earl of Galway, enabled them to settle in London and the provinces, where houses and churches were reserved for them and work provided for their experienced hands. Those of them who belonged to the nobility or gentry and had no calling to follow were enlisted as officers in the Army, and were later to distinguish themselves in the Irish campaigns; the scholars and men of letters were welcomed by the learned societies of the capital. Saint Evremond lost no opportunity of promoting their welfare, and of helping his friend Ruvigny to mitigate the wretchedness of their plight, although it must be admitted—if we may take his long letter to M. Justel as a general expression of his sentiments in the matter—he found it hard to believe that a man could be so fanatical in his beliefs as to allow himself to be persecuted for them, and because he was so sceptically minded he would never understand why people were intolerant of any other beliefs but their own. It was inevitable perhaps, that his epicurean mind should make him something of an egoist intent upon cultivating his own garden and upon bringing it to perfection as far as the instability of human affairs and affections would allow, he was not concerned for what his neighbours did, unless he was actually

brought in contact with them As far as his own happiness was concerned, it mattered little whether some people enjoyed cutting each others' throats, and that others believed that they were born to eternal damnation, he was wise enough now not to meddle in affairs of state, and if he consorted with such men as Sunderland, Godolphin and Montagu it was to confer with them about horse-racing or cards, and not the chicanery of the Council Table. The Thirty Years War had meant little more to him than an opportunity for fighting, the Popish Plot was forgotten at the basset-table, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the Revolution affected him only in so far as the one gave him an opportunity of making new friends and the other of meeting old ones again

On the accession of the Prince of Orange to the English throne, as William III, Saint Evremond was no longer in danger of becoming destitute "For that Prince," as Des Maizeaux remarks, "had been very kind to him in Holland, and when he came to be King of England, gave him several substantial marks of his Favour He often took him into his Parties of Pleasure, and loved to converse with him, and to hear him talk of the great Captains that he had seen in France, and of the military transactions to which he had been witness"

In 1689, less than a year later, came the unexpected news from France that Louis XIV had at last agreed to Saint Evremond's return It arrived too late. A few years before he would have gone back joyfully and willingly Now, in spite of the earnest entreaties of all his friends, he would not go, he was too old, too ill, contented enough where he was to want anything better than to be allowed to die in peace. Roots that are thirty years old do not easily bear transplanting, and he knew that it would be folly in his case to attempt such a thing

After all, he still had his duchess, though she had

left London and was now living in the country at Chelsea, where, at her house in Paradise Row, he was still welcome at a hand of cards But the gaiety of the old days in Saint James s had vanished, she was no longer the reigning beauty of the town, age and the advent of a new society, which resented the conduct of its predecessors, left her a pathetic and neglected relic from another world Reduced to a miserable poverty, she was compelled to borrow or beg the mere necessities of life, and as her debts increased she became more and more slatternly in her manners and appearance In the end she took to drinking spirits in order to keep her thoughts from dwelling on the squalor and misery of so mean an existence She lingered on until the last year of the seventeenth century, when she was seized with an illness from which she never recovered, dying in her house at Chelsea towards the middle of June

"Saint Evremond" says Des Maizeaux sustained an irreparable loss by her death The conversation of so accomplished a lady was everything to him it made him forget his disgrace, and furnished him with a thousand agreeable amusements Her house was become his and to lose the use of it, was to be reduced to a second banishment, more insupportable than the first The Duchess had always a very great esteem and regard for him She scolded him sometimes, for her temper was somewhat fickle and capricious but these sallies were of no consequence She could no more live without his conversation than he could live without her After all, she had not a more faithfull firm friend upon earth and this mutual attachment lasted five and twenty years He was so touched by her death that for a long time he could not speak of her without expressing his sorrow

The loss of other friends, whose death did not deprive him of the amenities of life had never affected

him very deeply; he could resign himself to
exorableness of death with the consoling thoug
"we must insensibly go whither so many bra
good men have gone before us." But the de
his lady duchess discovered the weakest spots
philosophy, after she had gone he could do n
without remembering that he had done it all
and in happier circumstances while she was
There was nothing left to him now but a few c
tions to while away the last years of his life
renewed his correspondence with the now
octogenarian Ninon, glad to remember that the
still someone alive who knew him in the very
days before his exile But the tone of his lette
her replies charming as they are is a mela
one, enlivened occasionally by references
pleasures of the table the last infirmity of thes
noble minds Other pleasures were vanishir
by one: the conversation of friends, the l
books, even cards were no longer able to al
the burden of old age. "If only," Ninon
"one could believe, as Mme de Chevreuse di
she was dying, that she was going to chat w
her friends in the next world. . . ." But
knew, as she recorded in her letters to her old
the deaths of their contemporaries, that they
never meet each other again either in this
or the next, only faith could make one
that such a thing were possible, and neither s
Saint Evremond was blessed with it. And
younger generation had not forgotten them
daughter of Saint Evremond's old friend, W
Earl of Rochester, now Countess of San
astonished and delighted Ninon while she was
in France, as she was later to charm Pope and
Chesterfield, and almost made her young again with
the vivacity of her wit and that malicious sp
ness which she had inherited from her fathe and

with which she bewildered her husband Like Voltaire, who is said to have been presented to Ninon when he was a child, Elizabeth Sandwich is one of the subtle links that join the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries together For she inherited from Ninon, besides the portrait which Horace Walpole used to show with such pride at Strawberry Hill, some of Ninon s sceptical wit, for which her salon in Paris afterwards became famous, and which Chesterfield recommended as an essential part of his son's education

Lady Sandwich returned to England at the turn of the century with news of Ninon for Saint Evremond, while he replied with messages and gifts of tea entrusted to Frenchmen who were returning home ' I leave London with much regret," wrote one of them to Dr Sylvestre ' I wish I was there if only to play at Ombre with M de Saint Evremond and you and I should like to lose so that I might have the pleasure of eating at the end an asparagus salad, and of drinking a bottle of Burgundy which never happens when one wins '

Saint Evremond struggled on for another two years, until his health which all his life had worried him, began to fail It became impossible for him to go abroad as much as he wished and he was reduced to staying indoors where he was a prey to his own regrets Sometimes he would listen to a little music at Mrs Bond s or he would wander out into the streets to buy a handful of jonquils for Madame de la Perrine whom he had tried to love as a successor to Madame Mazarin, and he would still correspond with his doctor, Sylvestre and with Lord Montagu, whose splendid house in Northamptonshire he was too old to visit, and rather against his will, but to please his friends he tried to collect his manuscripts and put them in order for the printer In this he was ably and enthusiastically helped by Des Maizeaux and

Sylvestre, who ran all over the town tracing the original copies, persuading him to revise them, or at least to vouch for their authenticity. This was his last work

"In the mean while," says Des Maizeaux, "M de Saint Evremond, who was troubled with the stranguary, found himself on the sudden very much weakened, thro' frequent want of rest, occasioned by his distemper, and his stomach failed him. Hereupon he often expressed a desire to see me, and even charged Dr Le Fèvre to write to me to come to him as soon as possible but his letter having been long on the road came too late; and at the same time I received a second, with the melancholy news that M de Saint Evremond died the 9th of September, 1703"

No comets blazed at his death, he was perhaps a little querulous towards the end, but he left the world as he wished, with no fuss or commotion His writings were handed over to Dr Sylvestre at his own request, and about a fortnight before he died he ordered his affairs, leaving his friend Lord Galway to execute the instructions of his will. "I leave to the Executor of this my last Will," he wrote on the 24th of August, "the care of burying my body, without Pomp, in such a manner as he shall think most fitting I bequeath to the poor French Refugees the Sum of Twenty Pounds Sterling I also bequeath to the poor Roman Catholicks, or of any other Religion, the like Sum of Twenty Pounds Sterling" His legacies to the Protestants and Catholics were in keeping with his freedom of conscience, for although Des Maizeaux asserts that he "ever professed the Romish Religion, in which he was born," he never practised it, and preserved throughout his life and on his death-bed, when he refused to see a priest, a dislike for authority in spiritual affairs

To Lord Galway was left the choosing of a grave and his choice conformed to the letter, if not to the spirit of Saint Evremond's will, for as Des Maizeaux remarks with subtle emphasis his desire to be buried '*without Pomp* was complied with but the place chosen for his burial was the Abbey or Collegiate Church of Westminster famous for the Tombs of the Kings of England and of the great number of persons distinguished by their Birth, Learning or Wit' There he was buried and there he lies in the company of Chaucer, Spenser and Cowley beneath the marble slab crowned by his effigy in marble, upon which his epitaph is inscribed

Carolus de Saint Denis D[omin]us de Saint Evremond
Nobile genere in Normannia ortus
A prima juventate
Militiæ nomen dedit
Et per varia munera
Ad Castrorum Marescalli gradum evectus
Condæo Turennio
Aliisque claris belli ducibus
Fidem suam et fortitudinem
Non semel probavit
Relicta patria Hollandiam
Deinde a Carolo II accitus Angliam
Venit
Philosophiam & humaniores litteras
Feliciter excoluit
Gallicam Linguam
Cum soluta tum numeris astricta oratione
Expolivit adornavit locupletavit
Apud potentiss Angliæ Reges benevolent & favorem
Apud regni proceres gratiam et familiaritatem
Apud omnes laudem & applausum
Meruit

Seven years before he died he had sent his 'Character —a kind of obituary notice—to the Comte de Gramont He is a Philosopher,' he says of himself 'equally remote from Superstition and Impiety a Voluptuary who has no less aversion for Debauchery than inclination for Pleasure, one who never

felt the pressure of indigence, who was never acquainted with Plenty He lives in a condition despised by those who have every thing, envied by those who have nothing, relished by those who make their Reason the foundation of their Happiness. When he was young, he hated Profuseness, being persuaded that Wealth is necessary for the Conveniences of a long Life now he is old, he can hardly endure Thriftiness, being of opinion, that want is little to be dreaded, when a man has but little time left to be miserable. He is well pleased with Nature, and does not complain of Fortune He hates Vice, is indulgent to Frailties, and laments Misfortunes

"He searches not after the failings of men with design to expose them, he only finds out their Ridicule for his own diversion: he has a secret pleasure in perceiving this himself, he would have yet a greater in discovering it in others, were he not checked by Discretion

"Life, in his opinion, is too short to read all sorts of Books, and to burden one's Memory with a multitude of Things at the expence of one's judgment. he does not apply himself to the most learned writings, in order to acquire Knowledge, but the most rational, to fortify his Reason. Sometimes he chooses the most delicate, to render his own taste so, sometimes the most agreeable to give the same turn to his own Genius"

Des Maizeaux, who was intimately acquainted with Saint Evremond in the last years of his life, records that "his Behaviour was civil and engaging, his Conversation lively and pleasant, his Repartees quick and happy M de Saint Evremond," he adds, "told me one day that he had not known three in his whole life that could read justly He had this art in perfection, and what is altogether as uncommon, he had a very happy way of telling a story His Humour," he continues, "was ever gay and merry

he was extreme fond of the company of young people, and delighted to hear the stories of their adventures, his mind being agreeably entertained with the idea of such diversions as he was not able to enjoy"

And yet, for all these engaging qualities, which went far towards realizing in the person of Saint Evremond that ideal of the perfectly civilized man—the *honnete homme*—there was something lacking, a fundamental quality which escaped the sympathetic, but slightly superficial analysis of his biographer Others have noticed it, among them Sainte Beuve, who justly compares him to Fontenelle For he was, when all is said and done, though without the theological implication, a quietist, there was little fire in him little genius Indolent by nature he cultivated to an extreme degree the art of avoiding trouble at the expense it must be admitted, of passionate experience He was content to enjoy the milder pleasures of life, without committing himself to the risks from which the extremes of happiness and misery arise Little is known of his heart, but it is certain that in his relations with the two women to whom he was most devoted Ninon de Lanclos and the Duchesse Mazarin, there was more friendship than passion, less pure happiness than mild but constant enjoyment His scepticism, and love of raillery, which is inherent in all his writings, and indeed makes a large part of their charm protected him too well in his personal relationships from ever abandoning himself wholly to his desires He was self critical to a point where any action is suspect preferring to amuse himself with the follies of others than run the risk of amusing others with his own

Laziness was at the bottom of his untidy habits, which so distressed the Duchesse Mazarin and laziness again caused him to forgo the trouble of correcting and preserving his manuscripts so that he was

content to allow them to fall into the hands of unscrupulous printers, who profited by his carelessness. Even his best and longest work is marred by the absence of several chapters, which were lost and which he never troubled to rewrite. His reputation, as a result, suffered, for his critics judged him and they can hardly be condemned for so doing- by the faulty versions of his own work which were put on the market, and by innumerable apocryphal pieces, attributed to his pen, but which he never cared to disown. Dryden, however, discovered some of the true qualities of his work through its disguise, and expressed his opinion of them in a preface he wrote to a miscellaneous collection of essays that appeared in an English translation in 1692. "There is not only a justness in his conceptions, which is the foundation of good writing," he says in that place, "but also a purity of language, and a beautiful turn of words, so little understood by modern writers, and which, indeed, was found at Rome but at the latter end of the Commonwealth, and ended with Petronius under the monarchy If I durst extend my judgment to particulars, I would say that our author has determined very nicely in his opinion of Epicurus, and that what he has said of his Morals is according to Nature and Reason"

Notwithstanding, "his opinion of Epicurus" was cordially disliked in some quarters, and his rule of living, which conformed in the main with the precepts attributed to that philosopher, was severely criticised by more dogmatic moralists, especially towards the end of his life, when a reaction had set in, both in France and in England, against the libertine spirit and the Restoration spirit respectively One of these criticisms, attributed to Armand Jean du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, and entitled in translation *The Character of Saint Evremond in his Works*, is preserved in manuscript in the British Museum, and

has not been printed In it he is styled "a half-scholar, who knows too much for weak intelligences, too little for strong, and who moreover has been ruined by the opinions of Epicurus, and by the reading of Petronius rash and daring, critic of things of which he is ignorant, discussing the opera which he has never seen, and the English and Italian Comedy without knowing either English or Italian, sacrificing the latinity of Cicero to that of Petronius, whose only strength, or rather weakness, was to exhibit every kind of obscenity in a pompous and flowery language'

Saint Evremond, however, was not troubled by what the critics said he had told his friend Sylvestre as much when he was confronted with Cotolendi's intemperate dissertation 'He thought what he liked, not liked what he thought," as Horace Walpole afterwards remarked and if what he preferred to think and to express had the effect of sending him into perpetual banishment, at least it enabled him to enjoy integrity of mind, and that freedom of raillery, without which as Shaftesbury observed, Wit loses its liberty

In England, after the Restoration, satire became a ruling passion, but it was satire unadorned, for the most part, with elegant irony Dryden was an exception, but his use of irony was usually confined to his poetry Saint Evremond who had learned much from La Bruyère and La Rochefoucauld, introduced it into prose with as much skill, though with less beauty of style, as Pascal in his *Provincial Letters*

'In two things, at least" says Professor Saintsbury, "Saint Evremond had no superior in his day, and he may be thought even to have had some claim to originality in both The first was the application to serious and practical subjects of the ironic method the second was the use of this method in fashioning light essays conveying important conclusions In the first he serves as a link between Pascal and Vol

taire, in the latter as a link of perhaps still more importance between Montaigne and Addison."

Here, in his letters, we need not look for literary influences, or for the propagation of ideas, the inquisitive minded will find them if they are minded to make the search. But we shall find what is more generally interesting material for the recreation of a delightful and sympathetic character, of the company he frequented, of the age in which he lived.



NINON DE LANCLOS

LETTERS OF SAINT EVREMOND

I

TO MONSIEUR

MAN, WHO IS DESIROUS TO KNOW ALL THINGS, KNOWS NOT HIMSELF

[1647 ?]

YOU are not so sociable of late as you us'd to be Study has something cloudy and melancholy in it which spoils that natural chearfulness, and deprives a Man of that readiness of wit, and freedom of fancy, which are requir'd towards a polite Conversation Meditation has still worse effects in Civil Society Wherefore let me advise you to take care, that you lose not by it with your friends, what you think to gain with your self

I know very well, that the disquisition which employs you at present, is both serious and important, you desire to know what you are, and what you shall be in another world when you shall cease to be in this But pray tell me, can you imagine that those Philosophers whose Works you read with so much application, have found what you enquire after? They have search'd it, as well as you, but they have search'd it in vain Your curiosity has prevail'd in all ages as well as your reflections, and the uncertainty of your knowledge The most devout cannot always command their Belief, or the most impious their Incredulity and 'tis one of the misfortunes of our lives, that natural Reason cannot assure us, whether there be another life or no

The Author of Nature was not pleased to allow us to be perfectly acquainted with our selves, and

amidst the too curious Desires of knowing every thing, he has reduc'd us to the Necessity of being ignorant of our selves. He animates the Springs of our Soul, but conceals from us the admirable Secret that makes them move; and that knowing Artificer reserves to himself the sole Knowledge of his Work. He hath plac'd us in the midst of numberless varieties of Objects, with Senses capable of being affected with them: he has given us a Mind that makes continual efforts to know their Nature. The Heavens, the Sun, the Stars, the Elements, all Nature, and even the Supreme Being on whom it depends, are subject to its Speculation, if not to its Knowledge. But, are we affected with the least Pain? our fine Speculations vanish away. Are we in danger of Death? there are few people but would give up the advantages and prerogatives of the mind, to preserve this base and gross part, this earthly body, which Philosophers set so little value upon.

I return to the Opinion, which, I suppose, you will not approve, and which, however, I believe to be true enough, *viz. That no man was ever convinced by reason, either that the Soul was certainly immortal, or that it is really annihilated with the body.*

'Tis not doubted, but that *Socrates* believ'd the Immortality of the Soul: we see it in what remains of the history of his Life; and the opinions which *Plato* fathers upon him, seem to confirm it. But yet *Socrates* does not warrant it himself; for when he appears before his Judges, he speaks of it like a man that desires it, and mentions Annihilation like a Philosopher that fears it not.

This, Sir, is the assurance which *Socrates* gives us of the Immortality of the Soul: let us see what proofs *Epicurus* will give us of its Annihilation *Epicurus* is unacquainted with any thing but the Body; with him the Soul, the Mind, the Understanding, all is matter, all subject to corruption and dissolution.

But does he not seem to contradict at his death the maxims he taught during his life? Posterity affects him, his memory becomes dear to him, he flatters himself with the reputation of his writings, which he recommends to his disciple *Hermarchus* His mind, which was so far engag'd in the opinion of Annihilation, is affected with tenderness for it self, laying up honours and pleasures for a state different from that it is going to quit

From whence, think you, proceed the contradictions we find in *Aristotle* and *Seneca*, about this matter? but from Uncertainty in a question of the most importance as well as the most remote from our knowledge From whence proceeds this diversity of opinions? 'Tis because they are confounded by the different notions of present Death, and future Life Their Soul, which is a stranger to it self, establishes or overthrows its own opinion, according as it is seduced by the various appearances of truth

Solomon, who was the greatest of all Kings, and the wisest of all men, seems to furnish the Libertines with arguments to defend their errors, even at the very time he advises good men to continue firm in the love of Truth If any one ought to have been free from error, doubts, inconstancy, surely it was *Solomon* yet we see by the inequality and changeableness of his conduct, that he was some times tired with his Wisdom, as he was at others weary of his Folly, that his virtues and vices gave him disgusts by turns, that some times he thinks all things are govern'd by Chance, and that at other times he ascribes all to Providence

Let the Philosophers, let the Learned seriously examine themselves, and they will find not only an alteration, but even an absolute contrariety in their opinions Unless Faith subjects our Reason we pass our lives betwixt Belief and Unbelief, in endeavouring to persuade while we are unable to convince our selves

I know very well that some instances may be offer'd, which seem to contradict what I assert A Discourse upon the Immortality of the Soul, has prompted some persons to seek Death,[1] that they might the sooner enjoy the felicity that was promis'd them in another Life. But when we once come to this pass, 'tis no longer reason that guides us, but rather passion that hurries us away; 'tis no more the discourse that has an effect upon us, but the vanity of a noble Death, which we foolishly prefer before Life; 'tis a weariness of present miseries, and a hope of future enjoyments, 'tis a blind love of glory; 'tis a distemper· in a word, 'tis a fury that offers violence to natural instinct, and puts us beside our selves.

Believe me, Sir, a serene undisturbed mind is but little moved by the reading of *Plato*. It belongs to God alone to make Martyrs, and engage us by his promise to leave the Life we enjoy, for another which we know nothing of. For a man to pretend to convince himself of the Immortality of the Soul by reason, is a kind of distrust of the promise God has given us about it, and, in some measure, renouncing the only thing that may secure it to us.

What has *Descartes* gain'd by his pretended demonstration of a purely spiritual, and ever-thinking Substance? What has been the result of such refined speculations? Why, he has made the world believe that Religion did not convince him, without persuading either himself or others by his arguments

Therefore, Sir, read, think, meditate, and reflect, as long as you please, and you will find, after all your

[1] *has prompted some persons* Cleombrotus, the philosopher, is said to have drowned himself after reading Plato's *Phaedo* See also the story in Valerius Maximus of the Cyrenaic philosopher Hegesius whose gloomy descriptions of human misery drove many of his readers to suicide and caused him to be surnamed Πεισιθανατος

reading, thinking, meditating, and reflecting, that it belongs to Religion alone to decide, and that Reason ought to submit

LETTER 1 [Works 1728 I 26] Although the recipient of this letter is unknown the circumstances in which it was written are revealed by Saint Evremond himself Writing to Lionne in 1669 he refers contemptuously to some garbled versions of three short pieces which Barbin the Parisian book seller had printed without his authority He speaks of them as having been composed some twenty years earlier that is to say about the year 1647 There can be no doubt that these three essays one of which in the form of a letter is printed in this place were written for the group of men and women who met at the house of Madame de Sablé where the pastime of inventing maximes and caractères was as popular then as the game of consequences and qualities is in some families to-day Many of La Rochefoucauld s *Maximes* were born in Madame de Sablé s *salon* When Saint Evremond was forced to fly the country in 1661 he had no opportunity of carrying away the manuscript copies of these essays which were circulating among his friends so that an unscrupulous publisher had no difficulty in printing a surreptitious version of them The present text was established by Saint Evremond s friend and editor Des Maizeaux under his personal supervision

2

TO MONSIEUR

[1656 ?]

You acquaint me, Sir, that you are in love with a Protestant Lady, and that were it not for the difference of Religion you could resolve to marry her If you are of such a temper, as not to be able to bear the thought of being separated from your Wife in the other world, I advise you to marry a Roman-Catholick But if I were inclin'd to alter my condition, I should willingly marry a woman of a different Religion from my own for I should be afraid, lest a Catholick, thinking her self secure of possessing

her Husband in the next world, I could be glad I [illegible] self of enjoying a Gallant in this.

Besides, I have an uncommon thought, which, however, I believe to be true, viz. That the Protestant Religion is as advantageous to Husbands, as the Catholick is favourable to Lovers.

That Christian Liberty which the Protestants boast of, creates a certain spirit of Reserve, which better secures the women against the importunities of their Lovers: whereas the submission which the Romish Persuasion requires, does, in some measure, oblige them to suffer themselves to be overcome: and indeed, a soul that can submit to priestly Penance, must needs give way to pleasurable Impressions.

A regular Life is the main scope of the Reformed Religion; and Regularity easily leaves Virtue. The Romish makes women for more Devout, and Devotion easily turns into Love.

The one thinks it is sufficient to forbear what is forbidden: the other, who admits of works of Supererogation, allows herself some irregularities, tho' forbidden, because she does a great deal of good which is not exacted from her.

With the first, the Church is a security to Husbands, with the other, a place of the greatest devotion. And, indeed, the Objects of mortification in our Churches, do frequently enough inspire Love. In the picture, for instance-sake, of *Mary Magdalen*, the representation of her Repentance, will, in old women, raise an idea of her austere Life, but the young will take it for a languishment of her Passion: and whilst the good Mother designs to imitate the Saint in her sufferings, the melting Daughter thinks only on the Sinner, and amourously revolves the occasion of her Repentance.

Those penitent Ladies, who in a Convent mourn for the sins they have committed in the world, are an example for pleasure, as well as for grief. nay,

perhaps, they beget a Confidence in sinning by affording the prospect of a Resource in repenting A woman does not separately contemplate part of their Lives, but proposes the whole to her imitation, and giving her self up to Love while she is young, she reserves her tears for the comfort of her old age In that melancholy period of life, 'tis a kind of pleasure to mourn for one's Sins, or at least a diversion for tears, which should be bestow'd on one's infirmities

Then, say you, *I am entirely safe with a Protestant* to which I answer what honest *Hippothadeus* said to *Panurge Yes, an t please God* [1] He that's wise, trusts to Providence, depends upon it for his security, and on himself for a quiet mind

LETTER 2 [Works 17-8 I 40]

3

TO MADAME

[1656?]

I remember Madam, that when I went to the army, I begg'd that the Chevalier *de Gramont* [2] might succeed me in your favour, in case I should be so unfortunate as to meet my death there, in which particular, you have so well obey'd that you love him whilst I am alive, to learn to do it better after my death You are very punctual in obeying my

[1] Cf Rabelais *Gargartua and Pantagruel* Book III Ch XXX *Panurge* Shall I be a Cuckold Father yea or no? By no means (answer'd Hippothadee) will you be Cuckolded if it please God [Urquhart's translation]

[2] Philibert Comte de Gramont (1621–1707) the gallant and despicable subject of Hamilton's Memoirs where he is described as Saint Evremond's hero For some account of Gramont's friendship with Saint Evremond when both of them were exiled in England see Introduction

orders, and should I continue to give you the same commission, in all appearance, you would see it carefully executed.

You may imagine, Madam, that I design to hide a real grief under a pretended banter, and being so well acquainted with my passion, you cannot easily persuade yourself, that I can suffer a Rival without jealousy. But perhaps you don't know, Madam, that if I dare not complain of you, because I love you too much, I dare not complain of him, because I love him little less. And if I must of necessity be angry, tell me whom I am to be most angry with; either with him who goes to rob me of my Mistress, or you who steal my Friend from me

Let the matter be how it will, you need not give your self much trouble to appease my indignation. My passion is too violent to indulge my resentment in the least, and my tenderness will always make me forget the injuries I have received from you. I love you, tho' perfidious; I love him, tho' treacherous; and only fear that a sincere friend is no favourite of either of you. Farewell. Let us enter, I beseech you, into a new unknown sort of confederacy, and by a strange mystery, let his, let your, and my friendship, be only one and the same thing.

LETTER 3 [Works, 1728 I 13] Giraud, in his edition of Saint Evremond (Paris, 1865), suggests that this letter and the following were addressed to the Comtesse d'Olonne The conjecture is attractive, but the evidence is so slight that it cannot be accepted with any assurance The "Lioness", as she was called, was one of the most brilliant members of the society of "Mademoiselle", and the intrigues in which she was involved with some of the brightest wits of the age naturally attracted the attention of malicious gossips Bussy Rabutin in his "Histoire amoureuse des Gaules", thinly disguises her under the name Ardelise and hints that Saint Evremond was one of her earliest and most fortunate suitors At the same time it should be remembered that her husband was an intimate friend of Saint Evremond's and a constant companion in his pleasures,

this makes it hard to believe that he permitted his friend to become his wife's lover without some record of the transaction becoming common property As far as I know there is no mention of such a scandal by any credible witness

4

TO MADAME

[1656?]

I thought that you had utterly forgot me, but by a more refined and ingenious conduct, you treat me as if you just began to know me

In truth, I never saw such a civil Letter in my life, and at the same time so very little obliging as yours You have hit upon so nice, so delicate an indifference, that I cannot complain of you without regret, nor commend you without the just imputation of silliness *Generosity, Gratitude Obligation*, are common expressions in your Letter It seems you have, for my sake, been at the expense of learning all the terms that have been used in compliments, and have forgotten all those that express any sentiment of love It must be confess'd Madam, that you imitate your Mother's style perfectly well At first sight I thought I had receiv'd a token of her Ladyship's remembrance Besides this, Madam, that doleful jargon of being overwhelm'd with *Misfortunes* does not at all become you, but seems to proceed from a person that labours under a mysterious discomposure

As for your self who never acted the sham mourner, how came you to pitch upon me, a God's name, to tell your doleful story, and entertain me with the shew of such noble misfortunes? Am I then good for nothing in the world, but to be the confidant of your affected melancholy, and studied sorrow?

As it is impossible for you, Madam to become indifferent to me, I was asking M about you, who told me that you danced from morning till

night, and that one could not pass the time more merrily than you did.

Adieu, *miserable Person*, overwhelm'd with a long train of *Misfortunes*, full of *Gratitude* and Acknowledgement to those who *take any part* in your *Miseries*. Adieu, more tenderly, a thousand times, than you write civilly to me. I conjure you to believe that you have not civility enough to discourage me; and that I would rather chuse to be, all my life-time, the confidant of your sorrow, than to have nothing at all to do with you

LETTER 4 [Works, 1728 I 14] Giraud gaily suggests that this letter was addressed to Madame Brancas who, in the absence of her husband, consoled herself with her admirers In the society in which she lived there is every reason to suppose that her consolation took that form, but there is absolutely no evidence to show that Saint Evremond had anything to do with it

5

TO MADAME . . .

[1656?]

You are upon the point of making a very sorry Gallant of a very good Friend, and I perceive that what I call'd satisfaction, when I was with you, is now become insensibly some sort of a charm. I talk no more of *turning into ridicule;* and the very same person who set such a value upon your malicious fancies, now discovers in you more affecting qualities, which give him a disgust for your first endearments.

You always appear'd very engaging to me, but now I begin to feel with emotion, what I was used to see only with pleasure To speak plainly to you, I am afraid I may be in love with you, if you will suffer me to love you: for at this present writing, I am in such a condition, that I can let it alone, if you don't like it.

You must not expect from me any fine thoughts, or noble raptures I am wholly incapable of them, and freely leave them to the admirers of Madame C [1] Let the drawing rooms make the most on't Permit Madame de to define Love by her own fancy, and don't envy the vain imaginations of those miserable creatures who when their beauty is decay'd, value themselves upon the wit that still continues with them, at the expence of the Face they have lost

Finding me so clownish in the contempt of refined sentiments, you'll imagine, perhaps, that I am a Hero as to the exercises of the body pray hearken how the case stands with me I am indifferent in every thing, and neither nature nor fortune has done any thing for me but what is common

As I cannot see without envy those people that are sumptuous and magnificent in their expences, so I cannot without some displeasure, behold those that are too much given to their pleasures and if I dare speak my thoughts, I hate in some measure, the *Vivonnes* and the *Saucours*,[2] because I cannot resemble them

My affairs go always at the same rate I never allow my self any extravagance, and I stand in need of a little economy to make things even at the year's end and pass a winter's night

Not that I am reduced either to want or infirmity

[1] *Madame C* Possibly the spiritual Madame Cornuel (1605–1694) who was famous for the brilliance of her repartee and the company that waited on her [*v* note Letter 120]

[2] *I hate the Vivonnes and the Saucours* Louis Duc de Vivonne (1636–1688) The poet Benserade in his Ballet royal des amours de Guise presents Saucourt as a notorious devil in intrigues and gives him the reputation of a daring and irresistible rake Saucourt or Soyaucourt is said to have been the original of the hunting bore in Moliere's Les Facheux and to have been introduced into that comedy at Louis XIV's request

but to explain my self frankly, my expence is small, and my efforts indifferent.

Tell me now whether with these qualities I may presume to set up for your Lover, or whether I am still to continue your Friend?

As for my self, I am resolv'd to take what part you assign me, and if I pass from Friendship to Love without difficulty, I am able to return from Love to Friendship, with as little violence.

LETTER 5. [Works, 1728 I 15]

6

TO MADAME . . .

[1656?]

How violent soever my friendship is, it has left me judgment enough to write to you with less passion and concern than I us'd to do. And to tell you the truth, I am somewhat asham'd to send you Country-sighs, which have neither the sweetness, nor the delicacy of those you hear But let them be what they will, I must of necessity venture them; and endeavour to make you remember me, at a time when all the world labours to have me forgotten.[1]

I don't question but that the interview of your pious Mother, and the rest of your godly family, was attended with abundance of tears: to be sure, to such a Mother's tears, you paid a civil and respectful return, like a well-bred Daughter. But then you know the world too well, to have any real tenderness for the disquiet of those Prudes, whose virtue is nothing else but a mere artifice, to deprive you of those pleasures which themselves regret.

'Tis enough that you shew'd once your obedience,

[1] A reference, presumably, to his disgrace at Court, the consequence of a duel [*v* note, p 21]

and sacrific'd your repose to a complaisance which perhaps, you did not owe her She is unjust, if, after she has exacted so severe a submission from you, she pretends to regulate your inclinations, and constrain the only thing she has left in your power

We love that which pleases, and not what is barely permitted to us but if you must ask leave of your Parents before you love, I am so well acquainted with their humour, that I dare assure you, you'll have but little occasion to be acquainted with that passion so long as you live

But perhaps this discourse may be altogether useless and considering your present circumstances, I ought rather to be apprehensive of those persons who advise you to love, than those who forbid it Perhaps you may follow the advice I give you and laugh at the reprimands of your Mother How do I know but that this poor Mother of yours to whom I wish so much mischief, may be in my interests, and that to stifle a growing passion in its birth, she does not allow you the liberty to love a person so remote from you?

Hithertoo I have had all the reason in the world to commend your constancy and resolution, but I doubt whether a mere idea will be able to dispute it long against a face, and memory against conversation I have too great an uneasiness upon me, to leave any longer the advantage of being present with you, to those Gentlemen that behold you and within a few days no manner of business shall hinder me from throwing my self at your feet In the mean time till I come to entertain you with my passion, remember how many thousand Oaths you have sworn to love me as long as you live

LETTER 6 [Works 1728 I 23]

7

TO THE COMTE D'OLONNE: OF PLEASURES

[1656]

You ask me what I am doing in the Country? I talk with all sorts of people, I think of all manner of subjects, and meditate upon none. The truths I look for, need not be narrowly search'd into: and, besides, I avoid having too long and too serious a Conversation with my self about any thing. Solitude imprints upon us I know not what dreary sadness, barely by putting us upon thinking on the wretchedness of our condition.

If a man intends to live happy, he must make but few reflections upon Life, but often depart, as it were, from himself, and amidst the diversions which exterior objects furnish him with, steal from the knowledge of his own miseries.

Divertisements, or *Diversions*, have borrow'd their name from the *Diversion* they give us, from sad and tiresome objects, to those that are pleasing and agreeable: which sufficiently shews, how difficult it is to overcome the hardships of our condition by any force of mind, but that a man may ingeniously decline them by dexterity and address.

'Tis the distinguishing Character of God alone, that he can contemplate himself, and in himself find his Felicity and Repose We can hardly cast our eyes upon our selves, but we there discover a thousand Defects, which oblige us to seek elsewhere what is wanting in ourselves.

Glory, Reputation, Riches, Amours, and well-manag'd Pleasures, are a mighty relief against the rigours of Nature, and the miseries of Life. And, indeed, the principal end for which Wisdom was given us, was to direct us in the enjoyment of Pleasures: but for all the excellence of that Virtue, we

shall find it stands us in small stead, when we are either rack'd with Pain, or alarm'd with the approaches of Death

Possidonius's Philosophy prompted him to say, in the sharpest fits of the Gout, *That the Gout was no Evil*,[1] but his Pain was not a whit the less for it *Socrates's* Wisdom made him discourse a great deal at his death, but his uncertain Reasonings persuaded neither his friends, nor himself, of the truth of what he said

I know some people, who disturb the joys of their serenest days, by the contemplation of a solemn Death, and, as if they were not born to live in the world, they only think of the manner of going out of it In the mean time, it comes to pass, that the extremity of Pain dashes to pieces their fine resolutions, when they stand most in need of them, that a fever throws them into a delirium, or, that doing every thing preposterously, they are strangely fond of Life when they must resolve to quit it

Oculisque errantibus alto
Quaesivit caelo lucem ingemuitque reperta

VIRGIL[2]

Thrice op'd her heavy eyes and sought the Light
But having found it sicken'd at the sight
And clos'd her lids at last in endless Night

DRYDEN

For my own part, as I ever liv'd at a venture, I shall be contented to die in the same manner, and

[1] I e Poseidonius the Stoic philosopher called by his pupil Cicero Stoicorum maximus According to Cicero it was not Poseidonius but Arcesilas who denied that gout was the summum malum and who during the visit of a friend begged him to stay and showing him his breast told him that the pain had not yet reached the heart

The description of Dido's death on the funeral pyre Virgil *Aeneid* Book IV 691–2

since Prudence had so small a share in the actions of my Life, I should be sorry she should take upon her to controll its end.

To speak soberly, all the circumstances of Death regard only those that remain behind us. Weakness or Resolution, all is equal at the last moment: and 'tis ridiculous to imagine, that this can signify any thing to those who are going to be nothing themselves There's nothing that can effectually conquer the horror of this dissolution, but the persuasion and confident expectation of another Life, with such a composure of mind, as to hope every thing, and fear nothing After all, we must insensibly go whither so many brave and good men are gone before us, and whither we shall be follow'd by so many others.

If I discourse so much upon Death, after having said that the contemplation of it is irksome, 'tis because it is impossible not to make some Reflections upon a thing so very natural. Nay, it would be a kind of effeminacy not to dare to think of it· but let people say what they will, I cannot approve a particular study of it, for such an employment is too inconsistent with the enjoyment of Life. We may say the same thing of Sadness and all sorts of Sorrows· a man cannot absolutely disengage himself from them; and I think them not only allowable, but reasonable on some occasions. Indifference is scandalous in some sorts of misfortunes; and a tender concern is justly felt upon the disgrace of a true Friend. but then our grief ought to be rare, and soon laid aside, whereas joy ought to be frequently and artfully entertain'd.

We can never bestow too much address on the Management of our Pleasures, and, after all, the most skillfull do seldom relish them well. A long preparation, by taking away the surprize, deprives us of what's most quick and exquisite in them. If we take no care of them, we enjoy them preposterously,

in a hurry inconsistent with Politeness, and a true nice Taste

An imperfect enjoyment is attended with Regret, a surfeit of pleasure with Disgust There's a certain nick of time, a certain medium to be observ'd, with which few people are acquainted We must enjoy the present Pleasures, without impairing the future

Neither ought the thought of wish'd for goods to appall the relish of those we possess This made the greatest men among the Antients set so great a value upon such a moderation as may be styl'd Œconomy, in things either desir d or obtain'd

As you do not exact from your friends such a regularity as may lay a constraint upon them, I com municate to you the Reflections I have made without any order, and just as they occur in my mind

All men are by nature prompted to gratify their Pleasures, tho' differently, according to the difference of humours and tempers The Sensual abandon themselves to their appetites, indulging themselves, like other animals, in all natural enjoyments

The Voluptuous receive an impression upon the senses, that reaches the very Soul I don't mean that Soul purely intelligent, from whence proceeds the most exquisite light of Reason, but a Soul more mix'd with the body, which is affected by all sensible things, and knows and relishes pleasures

The mind has a greater share in the taste of the Nice than in that of others Were it not for the Nice Gallantry had been unknown, Musick harsh and uncouth, and Meals coarse and nasty To them we are indebted for the *eruditus luxus* of *Petronius*, and all those polite and exquisite discoveries which our refin'd age has made

I have made other observations upon the Objects that please us, and methinks I have remark d very particular differences in the impressions they make upon us

There is a slight sort of impression, that does, as it were, but glance upon the Soul, awake its sensitive part, and employ it about agreeable Objects, on which it dwells with complacency, without either care, or much attention.

There is a sort of soft and voluptuous impressions, which melt, as it were, and deliciously diffuse themselves over the Soul; from whence arises that sweet and dangerous laziness, or indifference, which robs the mind of its vivacity and vigour.

There are moving Objects, which make their impression on the heart, and stir up its affection There are others, which by a secret Charm, hard to be express'd, keep the Soul in a kind of Inchantment There are others again so very keen, that they touch the Soul to the quick, and give it a pleasing smart. Beyond this, are the Raptures and Swoonings, which proceed from a disproportion between the sense of the Soul, and the impression of the Object. In the first, the Soul is transported by a kind of Ravishment; and in the other, it sinks under the weight of its Pleasure, if one may so speak.

This is what I had to say to you about Pleasures. It now remains, that I say something of the Mind, when it comes to it self again, and is restor'd to its natural state.

As light and wand'ring Minds never enjoy themselves, so on the contrary, the thinking and saturnine are still conversant with themselves; and it is to be fear'd, that instead of tasting the sweets of true Repose, their lazy and unactive application may throw them into a Wearisomeness However, that time which a man renders tedious to himself, by his sullen humour, is no less plac'd to his account, than the sweetest part of Life. Those melancholy hours, which we would fain pass away with precipitation, do full as much contribute to make up the number of our days, as those that escape us with regret.

I am none of those, who spend their time in complaining of their condition, instead of thinking how to alleviate it

Unhappy Knowledge source of all our woes,
Destructive of our Pleasure and Repose
Why when sore dire mischance has been sustain'd
Should the ungrateful image be retain'd?
Must we to grief such slavish homage pay
As sigh our best our dearest hours away?
Or to improve the pressures of our doom
Must we bewail the past or fear the Ills to come? [1]

I freely leave those Gentlemen to their murmurs, and endeavour to extract some comfort from those very things they repine at I entertain my self with an agreeable remembrance of past enjoyments, and with pleasant ideas of what is to come

If I am oblig'd to regret any thing, my Regrets are rather sentiments of tenderness than of grief and if in order to avoid Evil, we must necessarily foresee it, my foresight never goes so far as fear 'Tis my aim that the consciousness of feeling nothing that troubles me, and the consideration of seeing my self free, and master of my self, should give me the spiritual pleasure of good *Epicurus* I mean that agreeable Indolence, which is not a State without either grief or pleasure, but the nice sense of a pure Joy, which proceeds from a repose of conscience, and a serenity of mind

After all, what Pleasure soever we find in ourselves, let us take care not to dwell too long at home 'Tis an easy passage from these secret joys to inward griefs, so that there is no less good husbandry requir'd in the enjoyment of our own goods, than in the use of those that are eternal

Who knows not that the Soul is tir'd with being always in the same State, and that, at long run, it

[1] These verses are a very free adaptation of the four lines which are printed in the French text

would lose all its vigour, if it were not awaken'd by its passions.

If a man intends to live happy, he must make but few reflections upon Life; but often depart, as it were, from himself, and amidst the diversions which exterior objects furnish him with, steal from the knowledge of his own miseries.

Ne'er break thy rest with the designs of Fate,
For he that still improves his present state,
That follows time, insensible of fears,
And counts his Pleasures, rather than his years,
With ease and freedom tastes the present Joy,
And distant Ills do ne'er his thoughts employ,
His mind unbent, in innocent Repose,
No real grief, no gloomy moments knows.
He keeps a sweet remembrance of the past,
And hugs the present while the transports last
He steals from the chagrin [that] the future gives,
And, as the happy minutes come, he lives.
He rules his Passions with a sov'reign sway,
And makes inferior Appetites obey
Sometimes his Reason meets the coming joy,
And with King Nature's Dictates does comply
Favour he thinks a blessing worth desire,
And Glory does his active soul inspire
Yet both he sees without a jealous eye,
And State-convulsions don't his rest destroy
From Virtue's golden mean he never swerves,
And neither fears the thunder, nor deserves
In the same stream his Joys and Virtues flow,
He looks on Heav'n, yet scorns not Earth below
When Nature summons to another state,
He does not vainly murmur at his Fate
Dull volumes of the Schools he throws away,
And Heav'n's Decrees does patiently obey [1]

This is the utmost of what the Philosophy of *Epicurus* and *Aristippus* can afford to their followers: but true Christians, far more happy by the purity of the Precepts of the Gospel, will taste the sweets of an inno-

[1] These verses are a very free adaptation of the four lines which are printed in the French text

cent Life, which will be still attended by a greater Felicity

LETTER 7 [Works 1728 I 42] As a result of a duel with the Marquis de Fore Saint Evremond was compelled to retire into the country to await the King's Pardon From his retreat in Normandy he sent the following letter to the Comte d Olonne Louis de Tremouille Comte d Olonne (died 1686) married in 1652 Mlle d Angennes de la Loupe whose reputation for gallantry is recorded with little sympathy by Bussy Rabutin, La Bruyere and Saint Simon [*v* note, Letter 3]

8

TO MADAME

[1657]

As nothing is so honourable as an antient Friendship so nothing is so scandalous as an old Passion Undeceive your self, Madam of the false merit of being faithful and take it for a certain truth, that nothing is so injurious to the reputation of a Beauty as Constancy Who knows whether you resolv'd to love but one person or whether you could get but one Lover? You fondly imagine that you practise a Virtue, while you make us suspect that you have many Defects

But consider how many disquiets attend this wretched Virtue and what a vast difference there is between the disgusts of an old engagement, and the endearments of a growing Passion! In a new Amour you will find delights in every hour of the day 'tis an unexpressible pleasure to find that Love grows upon us every minute but in a passion of an old standing our time lingers very uneasily in still loving less We may converse well enough with persons that are indifferent to us, either out of decency and good manners or thro a necessary obligation but how can we pass our Lives with those we have loved, when we love them no longer?

I have only four words more to say to you, and I desire you to make some Reflection upon them. If you like what's disagreeable, it argues an ill taste; if you have not the resolution to quit what displeases you, 'tis a downright weakness. But do what you will, you'll be easily justify'd with me: for there's no foible but I will forgive in you, without pretending to any great indulgence.

When the fair Sex trangress the Laws,
They need no Advocate
Nature alone best pleads their cause,
And justifies the fault

LETTER 8 [Works, 1728 I. 25]

9

TO THE MARQUIS DE CRÉQUI
ON THE TREATY OF THE PYRENEES

[1659]

I wish I were able to gratify your curiosity, both as to the true motives of the Peace, and all that pass'd at the Conferences: but to deal frankly with you, you ought to have made application to the Cardinal's particular confidants, who by their long and familiar conversing with him, are fully instructed in all his secrets As for me, who was only a spectator, I can entertain you with nothing but conjectures, and some few uncertain hints, for which I am wholly indebted to my own penetration. Such as they are, I freely offer them to you; and the only favour I ask of you, in return, is that whenever you find me praising the Cardinal, you do not impute it to adulation. The good I say of him, is sincere; as not resulting either from the hopes of his favour, or gratitude for kindnesses receiv'd

As 'tis the greatest merit of a Christian to pardon

his enemies, and as the chastisement of those we love is the effect of the most tender friendship, so the Cardinal was induc'd to forgive the Spaniards, in order to chastise the French And indeed the Spaniards, that were humbled by so many misfortunes, and depress'd by so many losses were the proper objects of his Compassion and Charity, and the French, being grown insolent by their successes in the War, deserved to be mortified with the wholesome severities of a Peace His Eminence call'd to mind the fine saying of the Castilian, who coming to strangle *Don Carlos*, by order of *Philip II* said to him, *Calla, Calla, Sẽnor Don Carlos, todo lo que se hace es por su bien*, (that is, *Be quiet, Signior Don Carlos be quiet all this is for your good*) and pleas'd with so loving a sort of punishment, after he had seiz'd upon the goods of private men, and exhausted the publick treasure, he stifles our groans and suppresses our murmurs, by saying to us with a paternal affection, *Calla, Calla, Sẽnor Frances todo lo que se hace es por su bien* (*Come, be quiet Gentlemen of France be quiet, all this is for your good*)

I am inclin'd to believe that some politick considerations might mix with the Cardinal's Christianity I mean as to the courtesy and goodness he shew'd to the Spaniards *Augustus*, who had a mind to give limits to the Roman Empire, and leave it a just and proportion'd grandeur at his death might very well furnish him with an example in the moderation of his Peace

He was of opinion that France would better preserve it self, united as it is and compact as it were, within it self than in a vast extent, and he shew'd a prudence which few Ministers would have dreamt of, in the care of covering our Frontiers, when it lay in his power to have made an absolute Conquest of the Low Countries

Who does not know that the destruction of Carthage drew after it that of the Roman Republick? While

Rome had a rival to contend with, all within her walls was virtue and obedience: but no sooner was she freed from enemies without, than she made herself enemies at home, and had every thing to fear from within, when she had nothing to fear from abroad.

His Eminence, wiser than the *Scipios*, took care that we should not fall into that inconvenience, and taking warning from the faults of his fore-fathers, has preserv'd Spain on purpose to exercise the valour of France, and to maintain its Empire for ever.

Now pray, Sir, observe what a vast difference there is between this profound prudency, and the exorbitance of Cardinal *Richelieu*! Methinks I see that immoderate genius, not content with Flanders nor the Milanese, but laying hold of a conjuncture, which had not happen'd since the days of *Charles V.* to remit seven or eight millions to Frankfort, and to send a mighty Army to the banks of the Rhine, to revenge our Nation in the person of *Louis XIV* for the affront she formerly received in that of *Francis I* Methinks I see him enter into a new Alliance with Portugal, after the defeat of *Don Luis*,[1] and join our forces with those of that Kingdom, to drive the Catholick King from Madrid, without any respect to his sacred and inviolable Person.

Mean time, it was a Christian part to forgive his enemies, it was generous in him not to push his victories to the ruin of so fair a Monarchy; it was politic, not to extend our frontiers so far, as that the care of foreign acquisitions should make us neglect the main business at home

[1] *After the defeat of Don Luis* In 1658, during the minority of Alphonse IV of Portugal, the Spaniards endeavoured to take possession of his kingdom The Portuguese retired in disorder and Don Luis de Haro, confident of success, marched on the town of Elvas, where he was unexpectedly repulsed Saint Evremond maintains, says Des Maizeaux, that Richelieu would have taken the opportunity of forming an alliance with Portugal against Spain

I hear some of his Eminence's enemies, who not daring to exclaim directly against the Peace condemn the manner wherein it was concluded, find fault with the Suspension, and his too great easiness in condescending to come to Conferences, wherein every Article of the Peace was alter'd, tho' it had been ratified before

I own, indeed, that Monsieur *de Turenne* did all that lay in his power to dissuade from this Suspension, but he did not consider the true motive of so glorious an interview and while this great General's head was full of the conquest of Flanders he knew not the triumph the Cardinal proposed to himself, by a contention of wisdom and reason

And indeed he desir'd nothing more fervently than to let all Europe see the superiority of his genius, nor was he mistaken in his design, for he always got the better of *Don Luis's* understanding who frankly own'd the ascendent of his genius and his mastery in Politicks, but it unluckily fell out that the too great stubbornness of the latter, proved at last too hard for the resolutions of the former Thus the Spaniard in his gross blunt way carried those points which the Italian contended for with acuteness and justice Not that *Don Luis's* obstinancy was always successful, for when he boasts that we abandon d Portugal and consented to the restoration of the Prince *de Conde* we may justly charge him with an over-sight in the ammunition he left us, and his ignorance in Arithmetick in the valuation of the five hundred thousand Crowns that were assigned for the Queen's Portion

Let matters go as they will his Eminence may secretly flatter himself that he has made no unprofitable steps [1] Alsatia the territories in Italy, the Abbey of St Vaast, may comfort him for the pains he has taken whereas the chimerical *Don Luis* who minded

[1] *no unprofitable steps* that is to say he had appropriated for his own enjoyment lands in Italy and Alsace and the great abbey of St Vaast at Arras

nothing but the publick Good, maintain'd himself all along at his own expence.

It was to no purpose for him to put on such a grand air in the general declension of their affairs, since he own'd their weakness, so soon as the Peace was signed: *Come, Gentlemen,* said he, *let us go and return God thanks; we were undone, but now Spain is saved.*

His Eminence does not much value that noble Saying, which would have fitted the mouth of an old Citizen of Lacedemon; because he looks upon these Exultations for the Safety of one's Country, to proceed from a Republican Principle. He thinks judiciously, that a Peace is always good, when it saves millions that would be necessarily expended in the Prosecution of the War. Let the well-meaning *Don Luis* have no other end, than the Service of his Master, and the Publick good; it is the Cardinal's Maxim, *That a Minister does not so much belong to the State, as the State to the Minister;* and for this reason, if God grant him but a few years, he will get all the estates in the Kingdom into his own hands.

I pity those rattles who reproach him for making a Peace, when we were in a fair way to carry all before us. I think I have sufficiently justify'd his Moderation, and I can also alledge in his defence, such Reasons as he has often given himself.

The French, says he, *always carry their views abroad, without ever looking at home; and while they are bewilder'd with the affairs of their neighbours, entirely neglect their own.*

They will alledge, That after the Battle of Dunkirk,[1] *and the Defeat of the Prince* de Ligne, *that after the Surrender*

[1] *After the Battle of Dunkirk* The celebrated Battle of the Dunes (1658) in which Turenne, the French general, defeated the Prince de Condé who, driven into exile by Mazarin, had assumed the command of the Spanish army The Prince de Ligne was repulsed shortly afterwards In the Milanese, Spain had lost several towns to the Duke of Modena.

of some Towns, and the Conflerration of the rest, Flanders could not subsist longer that the affairs of the Spaniards were no better in the Milanese that the overthrow of Don Luis *had filled all Spain with terror, which was equally exhausted of men, and money, and to speak in the language of Physicians, that its vital parts were so less attack'd than its other members*

But they will not say that Cardinal de Retz *made a tour in Flanders, and that he left it so secretly, that they could never know the place of his retreat*

They will maliciously pass over in silence, that d'Annery, *the ring leader of Asse blies, had been tampering in the night time with the Gentlemen of the Vexin, that* Crequi-Berneuille *had been not near Hedin, that* Gratot, *and* Montresor *of the Country, had made a great many politick Harangues at Coutance, on the publick Welfare*

Nor will they take notice, that Bonneson *had armed the Wooden Shoe makers of Sologre, and encouraged that dangerous Party that was forming against the State* [1]

There was something yet more pressing, which nothing but the Cardinal's own Conscience could testify What a mortification must it be to a great Minister, absolute master of the Court, to see three

[1] The implication of the three preceding paragraphs is that Mazarin had concluded the peace in a panic created by rumours of petty risings in France The Cardinal de Retz one of Mazarin's most redoubtable enemies having escaped from prison in 1654 wandered secretly from place to place causing rumours of unrest to rise wherever he went Annery Créqui Berneuille and Gratot were three pathetic Normands who roamed aimlessly in the provinces after that grotesque civil war the Fronde and who were utterly incapable of doing any harm The description of Gratot as another Montresor is an elegant point of irony for Montrésor far from being a broken reed like Gratot had been a very sharp thorn in the side of Mazarin's predecessor, Richelieu! The wooden shoe makers of the Sologne a miserably poor district to the South West of Paris actually made a feeble attempt at rebellion but were immediately quelled and Bonneson, one of their leaders was executed

Governors of his own making, draw prodigious Sums of Money out of Flanders, without accompting with him! If we consider the generous temper of his Eminence, we may easily believe that he would sooner have chose to give up Corbie, Peronne, and St. Quentin to the Enemy, than suffer the Contributions of Arras, Béthune, and La Bassée any longer [1]

A man must dive into his very soul, to know what a vexation it must needs be to him, to be disappointed concerning St. Venant,[2] when his Project of raising a Million from thence came to nothing, while it was in the hands of *La Haye*.

Oudenard, Ypres, and Menin, did in truth maintain a great body of men, but when that was done, there was scarce enough to fill the Purse of Monsieur *Lange*. I go farther, and put the case that all Flanders had been surrender'd to us, we must have been forced to preserve their Privileges, and to put up with a wretched hundredth-penny

No, no, Sir, so solid a Minister is not to be satisfied with Titles and Lordships With him, that is called a true Conquest which is a real Acquisition of new Treasure. and, in his opinion, the reducing the number of Governors, the disbanding of the Troops, the retrenching all Expences, yet lessening none of our Taxes, is *Conquest* in a proper sense, and as good as gaining a new Kingdom If this be allowed him, I dare engage he will freely leave Spain in possession of all its Provinces, and religiously promise not to

[1] Des Maizeaux in his Life of Saint Evremond comments wittily on this paragraph "'Tis plain, he says, that Saint Evremond banters Mazarin, as if he concluded the peace purely to be revenged on those Governors, who would not let him go snacks in what they got by the Contributions (i e of the Frontier Towns)"

[2] *To be disappointed concerning St Venant* Mazarin had made La Haye governor of the town, hoping that he would allow him "to go snacks" La Haye, however, bagged everything for himself

disturb it in the War against Portugal The Indies are the only spot of ground which he envies Spain, but 'tis some consolation to him, however, that the Spaniards are at all the drudgery, and that he shall always have the greatest share of their *Flota*

Thus, Sir, I have laid before you the mystery of our Conferences, and the most secret thoughts of the Cardinal

If you would have me tell you the same truths seriously, and with another turn you are to know, that the Spanish Monarchy had been ruined in case the War had continued, nay, we had sufficiently weaken'd it by the Peace, if the Cardinal had not chose to negotiate it by himself, without the participation of any body 'Tis a plain case that he knew not the true degree of the Enemy's weakness and necessity And Monsieur *de Turenne's* conversation with him upon this subject, seem'd to him to be the discourse of a selfish General, that aimed to keep off the Peace, in order to get an Estate by the War

The ancient Reputation of the Spaniards kept their present Misery from his sight not being able to comprehend how a Nation so formidable heretofore could be so near its ruin Spain, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, which in effect were little better than names, gave him always a great Idea of their ancient Power he did not sufficiently consider what a condition we were in while his thoughts were wholly taken up with the former condition of our Enemies

The Valour of the Prince *de Conde*, deprived of the necessary means for acting the image of Cardinal *de Retz* miserably sculking to save his life, re called the late Commotions to his mind and made him apprehensive of new Revolutions He fancied three Norman Gentlemen, strolling from place to place, and the poor forlorn Peasants of the Sologne to be an Insurrection of all the Nobility and a Revolt of the whole Kingdom He imagined that all the world

attacked him, because he knew that all the world hated him.

As he had a mixture of different thoughts, let us consider how the motive of Interest worked upon him, next to the motive of Fear. Nothing made him so uneasy as the unavoidable Expences of the War; and he was ambitious to be master of all the Revenue, without being necessitated to employ it in the publick service. Then he concluded the finances to be entirely his own; and this was one of the principal motives to the Peace. The Independence of the Governors appeared to be another of his strongest reasons for it; and he always reckon'd in the number of the Towns left us by the Spaniards, those that were to return under the King's dominion. But to speak seriously, the vast Contributions that were rais'd, provoked his Avarice, and since he could not have his share of them with the Governors, it was a pleasure to him to hinder others from reaping those advantages for which he was not the better.

'Tis probable that the last Campaign of Monsieur *de Turenne* gave him some secret jealousy[1]; particularly those successes wherein his vanity could not be concerned, as it had ridiculously been at the Battle of Dunkirk Such extraordinary advantages without doubt set him upon negotiating, which he always had in his thoughts after the most prosperous events; in order to let the Generals know the uncertainty of their condition, and to keep them in the same dependence, in the midst of all their Conquests.

Besides he was afraid, that being incommoded with the Gout and Stone, and consequently not in so good a condition to follow the King, they might easily do without him in the field The remembrance of the

[1] *Gave him some secret jealousy* Mazarin was not alone in fearing the consequences of Turenne's brilliant successes, Colbert and Le Tellier, his chief ministers, were also alarmed at the prospect of Turenne taking the reins from their hands

late exploits, made him apprehensive of new ones, and to rid himself of the uneasiness, he chose to conclude the War by a Peace of his own making, rather than behold Conquests after Conquests, wherein he had no share

Moreover, he began to be weary of his ill usage of the Prince *de Conde* As his indignation had exhausted it self at long run, he reconciled himself to the thoughts of his return, nay, sometimes he flatter'd himself with the pleasure he should have to see him abandon'd by the Spaniard, and humbled before him He expected to find a general submission at the Conference, and there to dispose the fate of the whole world at his pleasure But *Don Luis*, who was supple, in order to hook him in, became haughty when he had him fast in his hands, and by his boldness in the Treaty, resolved to retrieve the reputation he had lost by his want of spirit in the War And truly 'tis very surprizing that the Grandees of Spain who were described to us so haughty should acknowledge the Superiority of our Nation, by paying such deference to the French, as rather argued subjection than civility, and that the Cardinal, who had the sole care of the honour and rights of France, should, with all the power and reason he was master of submit himself to another He might have done what he would with a high hand but having chosen to gain his point by dint of persuasion, and suffering *Don Luis* to assume authority the Spaniards made the Peace as if they had been in our place, and we received Conditions from them as if we had been in theirs I have been informed by some of them, that Monsieur *de Lionne* [1]

[1] *Monsieur de Lionne* Minister for Foreign Affairs [see note Letter 13] Saint Evremond says Des Maizeaux would have it understood that M de Lionne was an honest French man very stiff but that Mazarin was so impatient for a Peace that he gave up those points which Lionne was for insisting upon

had proved a thorn in their side, if his Superior had not removed all the obstacles which thwarted the conclusion of the Peace

This easy Temper of his made me reflect upon the different conduct of these two Ministers; and I find that in private Affairs the Cardinal was full of difficulties, dissimulation, and artifice, with his best friends; but that in publick Treaties, even with our Enemies, he was open-hearted, sincere, a man of his word, as if he had a mind to justify to foreigners, the reputation he had with us; and to cast the vices of his constitution upon the defects of our Nation As for *Don Luis*, he was civil to private men, frank and free with his friends, kind to his own creatures · but in publick negotiations, he cover'd a deep design to cheat under an appearance of simplicity, and had indeed but little honesty tho' he passed for a man of steady probity.

LETTER 9 [Works, 1728 I xxii] This prolonged piece of irony at the expense of the Cardinal Mazarin was probably the immediate cause of Saint Evremond's disgrace and subsequent flight from France [*v* Introduction] The letter, as Giraud has pointed out, is interesting as an expression of the irritation felt by a bellicose nobility that there was to be no more fighting It was printed surreptitiously in Holland in 1663 and reprinted in several editions of La Rochefoucauld's works The celebrated general, François de Créqui [born, *circa* 1624], the friend to whom Saint Evremond confided his opinion of the Treaty, was created a Marshal of France in 1668 and died nineteen years later

10

TO MONSIEUR . .

A JUDGMENT ON THE SCIENCES TO WHICH A GENTLEMAN MAY APPLY HIMSELF

[1662]

You ask me my opinion, about those Sciences to which a Gentleman may apply himself: I will give

you it very impartially without pretending to determine any man's Judgment by mine I never was much addicted to Reading, and if I employ any hours that way, they are the most idle, without design without order, when I cannot enjoy the Conversation of ingenious Gentlemen, and find my self debarr'd from pleasurable entertainments Do not therefore expect that I should speak to you profoundly of those things, which I have but cursorily examin'd, and upon which I have but slight Reflections

Divinity seems to me very considerable, as it is a Science which respects Salvation but in my judgment it is become too common, and 'tis ridiculous, that even women should dare to debate questions, which ought to be handled with a great deal of mystery and secrecy 'Tis sufficient for us to be obedient and submissive Let us leave this Doctrine wholly to our superiors, and follow with respect those that have the care of guiding us Not but that our Doctors themselves contribute to destroy this deference and start nice curiosities which insensibly lead us into Errors for there is nothing so well establish'd by the consent of all nations, but they submit it to the extravagance of Reasoning They burn a man who is so unhappy as not to believe a God, and at the same time 'tis a question in the Schools *Whether there is one or no?* By this means they stagger weak understandings, and cause a suspicion in the distrustful, by this means they arm the furious, and permit them to find out pernicious arguments whereby they combat their own real sentiments and the true impressions of their nature

Hobbes,[1] *the greatest genius of England since Bacon*, would not by his good will, suffer *Aristotle* to have so much credit in Divinity, and makes his subtleties the occasion of the several divisions in the Church

[1] Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) the author of Leviathan was a friend of Saint Evremond's during the latter's exile in England

It proceeds, perhaps, from these sorts of Reasonings, that the Divines are not sometimes the most docile; which gave occasion to the proverb, *That Physicians and Divines rarely trust to Remedies and Religion.* I'll say no more, but only wish, that our Divines would treat of matters of Religion with more moderation; and that those who ought to submit to them, would have less curiosity.

As *Philosophy* allows us a greater latitude in thinking, I have cultivated that study a little more. When I had reach'd that part of a man's age, that fits his understanding for the pursuit of Knowledge, I had a curious desire to comprehend the nature of things; and my presumption soon persuaded me, that I was acquainted with it. The least Proof, seem'd to me a Demonstration, and a Probability pass'd for Truth, nor can I express to you with what contempt I look'd down upon those whom I thought to be ignorant of those things, which I fancy'd my self to know perfectly well At length, when Age, and Experience, which unhappily never comes before the other, had suggested to me serious Reflections, I began to lay aside a Science always contested, and about which the greatest men ever had different sentiments. I knew from the universal consent of Nations, that *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Zeno*, and *Epicurus*, had been the luminaries of their age, and yet there was nothing so contrary as their Opinions. Three thousand years after, I found them equally disputed, sticklers on all sides, but nothing of certainty on any. In the midst of these Meditations, which insensibly undeceiv'd me, I had the curiosity to see *Gassendus*,[1] the most knowing and the least presuming of all Philosophers. After several long conversations, wherein he communicated to me

[1] Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655), called in his native Provence "le saint prêtre," and in Paris "The Atheist," was the most eloquent exponent of the doctrines of Epicurus in modern times His influence upon Saint Evremond, the direct

all that can be attain'd by Reason, he lamented, *That Nature had given so large a scope to our Curiosity, and such narrow bounds to our Knowledge*, adding, *That he did not say this to mortify the presumption of others, or to make an ostentation of his own Humility, that, perhaps, he was not ignorant what judgment might be made of several things, but that he durst not be positive, he was thoroughly acquainted with the most inconsiderable* Upon this, a Science which I already suspected appear'd too vain for me to subject my self to it any longer, I broke off all commerce with it, and began to admire how it was possible for a wise man to spend his life in unprofitable enquiries

The *Mathematicks* have indeed, much more certainty but when I consider the profound meditation they require and that they draw us from actions and pleasures, to employ us entirely in speculation, its Demonstrations seem to me very dear bought, and a man must be very fond of Truth to pursue it at that price You will tell me that we have but few conveniences and ornaments of Life but what we owe to this Science I freely own it, and there are no commendations which I will not bestow upon the great Mathematicians, provided that I am not one of their number I admire their inventions and the works which they produce but I am of opinion, that it is enough for persons of good sense, to know how to apply them well, for, in truth 'tis more our interest to enjoy, than to know the world

There are no Sciences, in my opinion, that particularly deserve the care of a Gentleman, but *Morality, Politicks* and *polite Learning*

The first has a relation to Reason, the second to Society, the third to Conversation the one teaches us to govern our Passions, by the other we are

result of their conversations together can be traced in the latter's generalisations upon life François Bernier (1625–1688) a disciple of Gassendi and a friend of Saint Evremond published in 1678 an abridged edition of his master's work.

instructed in affairs of State, and how to regulate our conduct in employments, the last polishes the mind, refines the manners, and makes us agreable.

Persons of quality amongst the Antients, took a particular care to instruct themselves in all these things. Every one knows that Greece has produc'd the greatest Philosophers, and the greatest Legislators: and we cannot deny, but that other Nations have borrow'd from them all the Politeness they can boast of.

The beginnings of Rome were rude and savage; but that fierce Virtue, which would not let them pardon their own children, was advantageous to the Common-wealth. As their Reason began to be more refin'd, they found a way to reconcile the motions of Nature with the love of their Country; and, at length, they join'd Graces and Ornament, to Justice and Reason; insomuch that, in the latter times, there was no person of any consideration, but who addicted himself to some Sect or other of Philosophy; not with the design to comprehend the principles and nature of things, but to fortify the mind by the study of Wisdom.

As for *Politicks*, 'tis scarce to be believ'd, how early the Romans instructed themselves in all the Interests of their State, with what assiduity they apply'd themselves to the knowledge of their Government and Laws, so as to render themselves capable of the affairs of Peace and War, even before they had made any publick trials of their abilities.

The least curious know how much they were affected with *polite Learning*; and it is certain, that there were but few great men in Rome, who did not keep some ingenious Grecians in their houses, to entertain them with agreeable conversation. Amongst a hundred examples which I could allege, I will content my self with that of *Caesar*, and the single authority of so great a man, will justify my assertion

Of all the sects then in repute, he chose that of

Epicurus, as the most human, and most conformable to his temper and his pleasures For, there were two sorts of Epicureans, the one liv'd a retir d studious Life, pursuant to the Precept of the first Institutor the other, who could not approve the austerity of too rigid a Philosophy, did therefore give way to more natural opinions Of this last class, were the greatest part of the ingenious men of that time who knew how to distinguish the Gentleman from the Magistrate, and apply their cares to the Republick, in such a manner, that there was time enough left both for their friends and for themselves It would be needless to tell you, how well vers'd *Caesar* was in affairs of State, or to enlarge upon the clearness of his Judgment, and politeness of his Conversation but this I will add, that he was able to dispute the prize of Eloquence with *Cicero*, and if he did not affect the reputation of it, no one can deny, but that he writ and spoke infinitely more like a man of quality, than that Orator

LETTER 10 [Works 1728 I 49] This epistle was printed anonymously at Paris in 1666 together with some of Boileau s satires Although the book had the approval of both contributors Boileau took offence and issued later in the year a revised edition of his satires from which Saint Evremond s work was excluded Boileau s hyper sensitive taste was offended it seems by inelegancies for which the printer was responsible and not the unfortunate author who was in exile at the time *[v note Letter 44]*

II

TO THE MARESCHAL DE GRAMONT

[1665]

You reproach me for not letting my Friends hear from me, to which I answer, that a man must first know who they are before he can write to them When the world frowns upon us, we shall find our selves mistaken, if we lay any stress upon old acquaint

ance, whom we are apt to call by the name of Friends. We frequently endeavour to make our selves remembered by certain persons who are desirous to forget us, and in whom we rather create a disgust, than an inclination to do good offices. Those that are really willing to serve us in our disgraces, are impatient to show us the desire they have to do it, and their generosity spares a Gentleman the secret pain which he always finds in himself, to expose his necessities As for those who expect to be courted, we may take it for granted, that they have already, as it were, form'd a design to abandon us, and that they look upon our most reasonable requests as very troublesome importunities. To apply this general Maxim to my own particular case, I will acquaint you, that I suppose I have already heard from all that are dispos'd to interest themselves in my behalf, and it would be to no purpose to trouble such with my Letters, as have not yet thought fit to let me have any from them.

Among those Friends, whom I have really found to be so in my ill fortune, some I observ'd were full of zeal and tenderness: others did not want friendship, but had a lively sense of their incapacity to serve me; and as they were little concern'd to find themselves without credit upon this occasion, they fairly left me to bear all my misfortunes by my self I am oblig'd to them for the good opinion they have of my Patience, 'tis a virtue to which we reconcile our selves as well as we can, but would willingly leave the practice of it to our Enemies. In the mean time, we ought to be content with the services that are done us, without complaining of those that are left unperform'd, and divest our selves as much as possible of the suggestions of Self-love, which make us think people more obliged to serve us, than really they are Ill fortune is not content with bringing us into calamity, but makes us more tender to bear, and more touchy to resent every thing; and nature, which ought to resist her, is in

confederacy with her, and gives us a more exquisite sense of all the evils she does us

In my present condition, 'tis my greatest care to keep my self from such impressions Altho I put on an air of concern, I have, indeed, brought my self to a kind of insensibility, and my soul, indifferent to the worst accidents that can happen, is affected with nothing but the good offices and continued kindness of some of my Friends For these four years, since I came out of France, I have from six months to six months, undergone new hardships, which I make as easy to me as I can by patience I don't love that unprofitable resistance which instead of preserving us from misery, does only retard that familiarity which we must contract with it

Besides, those in whose power it is to do all they please, are not so severe upon us, as otherwise they might be, when they see us submissive to their orders Opposition does but inflame their anger, without lessening their power This submission to my superiors disposes me insensibly to bear with those who are not so I hear my self frequently censured without reason, and after a slight justification, because I would not incense the world by too much argument, I patiently wait till people undeceive themselves, and in truth, there's more to be expected from time than from reason In the heat of an unlucky affair, some think it a trouble to give reasons, and others to hear them, but upon any change either of interest or humour, a man is sometimes extolled to the skies for that very thing which occasion'd his disgrace There are few persons at Court whose reputation I have not observ'd to vary twice a year, either thro the levity of our judgments, or the diversity of their conduct I am so vain as to hope that the same thing may befall me, but rather thro the reflections of others than any alterations in my self One day or other, I shall be accounted a good Frenchman for the very same Writ-

ing,[1] which has drawn reproach upon me: and if the Cardinal were still alive, I should have the satisfaction to know that he justified me in his conscience; for I have not said one syllable of him, which he has not said within himself a hundred times. As I was jealous of the King's honour, and of the glory of his Reign, I had a mind to describe the condition we were in before the Peace, that all other Nations might acknowledge the superiority of ours; and imputing the ill success of the Negotiation to a foreigner, might reflect only on the advantages we had in the War.

I shall conclude this melancholy Letter: 'tis a ridiculous practice common to people in disgrace, to infect all discourse with the rehearsal of their misfortunes, and as they are wholly taken up therewith themselves, they always endeavour to possess every body else with them. The company of my Lord *d'Aubigny*,[2] which I am going to enjoy saves me any farther impertinence; and you the fatigue, which you must otherwise have expected. With him joy is of all Countries and Conditions; insomuch, that in his company, an unfortunate man becomes too gay, and inconsiderately loses that serious air, which we ought,

[1] *For the very same Writing* i.e. the Letter to Créqui (No. 9) criticizing the Cardinal Mazarin's conduct over the Treaty of the Pyrenees.

[2] *My Lord d'Aubigny* [In the French editions, Monsieur d'Aubigny] Louis Stuart, Lord d'Aubigny, uncle of the Duke of Richmond and Lennox. About this time he had written to Saint Evremond, says Des Maizeaux "that before he went back to England, he would take a turn to Holland, from whence they two would go to see the principal Courts of Germany: but in the mean time, as he had no less interest in France than in England, such strong solicitations were made in his favour at the Court of Rome, that he was advanc'd to the Cardinalship, preferably to the Abbot Montagu, who was also powerfully recommended. 'Tis true, he had not the satisfaction to enjoy his new Dignity long: for he died in the month of November 1665, not many hours after the arrival of the Courrier, who brought

in good manners at least, to preserve in our misfortunes

LETTER 11 [Works 1728 Int 50] Des Maizeaux dates this letter 1664 but Saint Evremond's meeting with d'Aubigny to which reference is made in the last paragraph took place in Holland The correct date can be established from the reference in the third paragraph For these four years since I came out of France

Antoine Duc de Gramont Marshal of France (1604–1678) was the brother of that illustrious and disreputable wit Philibert Comte de Gramont the hero of Hamilton's Memoirs

12

TO THE MARQUIS DE CREQUI

[1665]

After having lived in the constraint of Courts, I take up with the comfort of ending my days in the freedom of a Commonwealth where if nothing is to be hoped for, there's at least nothing to be fear'd It would be scandalous for a young man not to enter the world, with a design to make his fortune But when we are upon the decline, Nature calls us back to our selves, and the sentiments of Ambition yield ing to the love of our Repose we find it a blessing to live in a Country, where the Laws guard us against the wills of men, and where, to be secure of all, we need only be secure of our selves

To this blessing we may add That the Magistrates have a great sway in their Offices for the interest of

him the Cardinal's cap D'Aubigny's death was felt very deeply by Saint Evremond who in order to distract his grief sat down to write an account of a Conversation he had had fifteen years before with the duc de Candale a task which will afford me he wrote more satisfaction than I can find in any conversation now I have lost that of my Lord d'Aubigny [*v* A Conversation between my Lord d'Aubigny and Saint Evremond Works 1728 I 186]

the Publick, but are so little distinguish'd in their Persons, by private advantages that here are no odious Distinctions offensive to men of breeding; no needless Dignities; no cumbersome Greatness, which cramps Liberty, without enlarging one's Fortune. Here men in authority procure our Repose, without expecting any acknowledgment, or even any respect for the services they do us. They are severe in the execution of the orders of the State, stiff in the management of the interest of their Country with foreign Nations; mild and tractable with their Fellow-burghers, easy with all sorts of private Persons The bottom of equality still remains, notwithstanding Power, and therefore credit never makes a man insolent, and the Governors never bear hard on those that are govern'd.

As for Taxes, they are indeed very great; but they are faithfully laid out for the publick good, and leave every one the comfort of contributing only for himself. Therefore the love people have here for their Country is not to be wonder'd at, since, properly speaking, 'tis no more than Self-love. But I dwell too long on the Government, without mentioning him [1] who seems to have the greatest share in it. To do him justice, nothing equals his Capacity but his Disinterestedness and Spirit.

Spiritual matters are managed with the like moderation. The difference of Religion, which in other places raises so many commotions, does not, in the least, ruffle here the minds of people, every one seeks Heaven after his own way, and those who are thought to go astray, are more pitied than hated, and bespeak from others a pure Charity, free from the indiscretion of mistaken Zeal.

As there is nothing perfect every way in this World,

[1] I e the celebrated Pensionary of Holland, Jean de Witt, who was assassinated at the moment of Louis XIV's invasion of Holland in 1672

we find here fewer polite persons than men fit for business, and more good sense in the management of affairs than delicacy in conversation The Ladies are very civil, and the Men are so easy as not to take it ill of one if he prefers their Wives' company to theirs The latter are sociable enough for an amusement, but have not vivacity enough to disturb a man's repose Not but some of them are very lovely, but then there is nothing to be expected from them, which may be ascrib'd either to their discretion, or to their natural coldness, which serves them instead of virtue Whatever may be the reason of it, we find in Holland a certain reservedness generally establish d, and I know not what tradition of Chastity, which passes from Mother to Daughter, like an Article of Faith

'Tis true, they do not find fault with the Gallantry of young Women, who are honestly allow d to use all innocent helps to get Husbands Some conclude the course of their Gallantry in a happy Marriage, while others, more unfortunate, feed themselves with vain hopes of a condition which is daily put off, and never comes These long amusements however, ought not to be imputed to any meditated design of infidelity A man finds himself disgusted at long run, and a disgust for his Mistress breaks his resolutions of making her his Wife thus fearing to pass for a deceiver he has not courage enough to break off, at the same time when he is not willing to come to a conclusion and so what by the power of habit and long acquaintance, what out of a foolish vanity of being thought constant a man makes a shift to keep up languishingly the miserable remains of a worn out passion Some examples of this nature have put very serious reflections into the heads of some young Women who consider Marriage as an amorous Adventure and their natural condition as the true state in which they ought to continue

As for the Wives, when they have once given their Faith, they think they have no right to dispose of themselves, and seem to know nothing in the world, but barely their duty. They would make it a conscience to allow themselves the liberty of affections which the chastest Women reserve to themselves in other places, without any regard to their obligations or dependance. Here the least liberties pass for Infidelity, and Infidelity, which passes for a genteel merit in agreeable Courts, is reckon'd the foulest of all vices with this honest Nation, which is very wise as to the conduct of its Government, but unexperienc'd as to refined Pleasures, and a polite way of living. The Husbands reward the fidelity of their Wives, by a great subjection; and if contrary to this receiv'd custom, a Man should affect to be lord and master in his own house, the Wife wou'd be pitied by all her neighbours, as the most unfortunate of her sex, and the Husband exclaim'd against as a very ill-natur'd fellow.

A wretched experience has given me judgment enough, at my own expence, to distinguish between these things, and makes me regret that time wherein we receive more satisfaction from sense than knowledge Sometimes I call to mind what I have been, to re-animate what I am at present, and from this remembrance of my former sentiments, is form'd a certain disposition to tenderness, or at least a removal from indolence A happy tyranny that of our Passions, which make up all the pleasures of our lives! An irksome empire that of Reason, if it robs us of all our agreeable thoughts and keeps us in an unprofitable idleness, instead of establishing a true repose!

I will not trouble you with a long account of the Hague: 'tis enough to tell you, that Travellers are charm'd with it, after they have seen the magnificence of Paris, and the rarities of Italy. On one side you see a Walk to the Sea, worthy of the grandeur of the

old Romans on the other you enter a Wood, which is the most agreeable one that ever I beheld in my life In the very same place you see Houses enough to make a great City, and rows of Trees sufficient to make a delicious Solitude At certain private hours, you find here all the innocent pleasures that the Country affords, at that of publick meetings, all the busy chat and noise, which the most populous Cities are able to furnish Their Houses are more free than in France, at the appointed times for receiving Company, but more reserv d than in Italy, when too exact a regularity obliges strangers to withdraw, and reduces the family to a close way of living We now and then go to make our court to the young Prince,[1] who will have reason to complain of me, for telling you only, that a person of his Age and Quality was never master of so much good sense and judgment To say all, I must tell you things that would not be believ d, and by a secret impulse of self love, I chuse rather to pass over in silence what I know, than not to be believ d in acquainting you with what you know not

LETTER 12 [Works 1728 I 203] Not printed by Planhol and wrongly dated 1664 by Giraud In 1665 during the great plague in London Saint Evremond retired to Holland for his health He was seiz d says Des Maizeaux with vapours that cast him into a sort of melancholy and weakened him very much The Physicians told him that nothing but the change of air could cure him and that if he could not go to Montpelier he would do well however to cross the sea, and stay some time in Holland

[1] *The young Prince* i e The Prince of Orange who was later to ascend the English throne as William III At the time of this letter he was a boy of fourteen and tho' divested of the Posts which his Ancestors enjoy d, and reduced in a manner to a private Station yet gave signs of an extraordinary Genius of that warlike Temper and that noble Ambition which he afterwards made appear in the whole course of his life [Preface to Works 1728 III xxviii by Dr Sylvestre]

13

TO THE MARQUIS DE LIONNE [1]

[1667]

Do not imagine, Sir, that I am over-fond of foreign Countries, because you see me employ so little care and industry to procure my Return to my own. It proceeds not from supineness, nor from a great affection to the places I am in, or an aversion to those where you are The truth is I would not beg of the King the least alleviation, before I had suffer'd what I ought to undergo, for having been so unhappy as to displease him. But, after so many years disgrace and sickness, I hope I may be allow'd to lay before you, in what manner I have fail'd, or if I dare speak it, clear my self of the appearance of a fault.

As the censure of those that are opposite to us, is the nicest commendation that can be given us, I thought I did artfully contribute to the glory of the genius that reigns at present, by exposing the shame of that which govern'd heretofore. Not but that the Cardinal had commendable talents: but those qualities which would have been applauded by men, consider'd purely in themselves, are become contemptible by the opposition of those of the King: from whence it comes to pass, that tolerably great actions are eclips'd by others more shining; that a

[1] Hugues de Lionne, Marquis de Lionne, Minister of State and the negotiator of the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1611–1671), must not be confused with his nephew, the Comte de Lionne who was one of Saint Evremond's most loyal friends during his exile The following letter was written from Holland at the Comte de Lionne's suggestion to the Minister, who appears to have been in favour of Saint Evremond's return His solicitations, however, were made in vain, and the King, prompted no doubt by his ministers Colbert and Tellier, turned a deaf ear to all his entreaties [*v* "Abregé de la Vie de Monsieur de Lionne, Ministre d'État" in "Mélanges Curieux Amsterdam 1726" I 179 *et seq*]

less merit when set near a greater, looks like a defect, and consequently that the King's glory ruins the reputation of his Minister so that to find fault with the despising what his Eminency has done, is in some measure to be sorry, that what his Majesty does, is admir'd

I own, that if the same Maxims that were then follow'd, were put in practice now, it would look as if an approbation of them should be requir'd, and we should immediately give ours, out of respectful duty but since they are purposely laid aside and even the most opposite Schemes pursu'd, there's a certain delicacy in not approving what's avoided and 'tis a piece of prudence to reject what so wise a King thinks not fit to do

Don't urge to me that 'tis a crime to attack the reputation of the dead [1] for if that be admitted, he who ruins it, would be the first and greatest criminal himself When he humbles the pride of the Spaniards, and the arrogance of the Germans, when he debases Rome and submits himself to the Church when he supports the Empire against the power of the Turk, at the same time that the King of Spain abandons the Emperor, and leaves the dominions of his family expos'd to the invasion of the Infidels, when he makes War with so much conduct and valour, and Peace with so much spirit and wisdom what does he do but condemn by his actions, what I have blam'd by writing, and pass a more severe and more positive censure upon it before the whole world?

Never doubt it, Sir 'tis the King himself who has done the Cardinal the injury that is charg'd upon me, his Majesty's shining and admirable qualities, his Actions his Administration, his Counsels, have suggested to me the small ideas I have of his Eminence and in my present condition, I must ask pardon for a thing which 'tis not in my power to repent of But

[1] The Cardinal Mazarin had died in 1661

what subject-matter of complaint has the Cardinal, which is not common to him with all our Kings? Have not their Reigns the same fate with his Ministry? Are not their atchievements cry'd down, and their reputation eclips'd, like his?

In former times, we thought it sufficient to maintain our selves against one Nation in War with us: but now a-days, all Europe, as one may say, in confederacy, is not able to stand against us. Heretofore we accounted that a glorious Peace, by which some place or other was restor'd to us · now the Spaniards seek their safety in the yielding up of whole Provinces; and if justice did not ever regulate our pretensions, the question wou'd not be so much what they yield as what they keep Formerly our Allies murmur'd for being ill-supported in the War, or abandon'd in the Peace. but in our days, those who were fallen thro' their own fault, have been raised up again by our assistance; and the influence of our Power has form'd all the greatness of others. To adhere to us, is a certain advancement, to be divided from us, almost certain ruin.

While the King acts as he does, he authorizes me to speak as I speak; if they will have me recant, let him grow remiss, abandon his Allies, and suffer his enemies to regain their ground. In such a case, I shall be favourable to the Cardinal, and cry up the same things I have run down: but at this time, when the Nations that adhere to our friendship behold with pleasure our present Government; and, on the contrary, the Nations opposite to our interest, regret with grief our last Ministry; all my reflections confirm me in what I have said; and my mind being steady in its first opinion, cannot be turned to other thoughts.

If the King's tenderness, continued to the memory of a Person who was dear to him, if the constancy of his affection for a dead man, have inclined to take ill what I thought so much to his advantage, I beseech

him to consider, that my Intentions are disappointed I did not think to offend the niceness of his Friend ship, and fancy'd that I had exquisite thoughts for the advantage of his Glory In all things mistakes are excusable, but an error that proceeds from so noble and so excellent a principle, leaves no room for resentment Do not think, however, that I hereby design to read Lectures instead of putting up most humble Prayers, and to instruct his Majesty in his Duty, instead of submitting to his Will I expect his orders about my fate with a perfect resignation, and I am prepared with gratitude for a pardon, or with patience to suffer the punishment

If he be so gracious as to put an end to my Miseries, he will add the dependance of a creature to the obedi ence of a subject, and soften the constraint that binds by the affection that attaches But I little consult my thoughts when I speak at this rate The obli gation in which I was born, is to me the strongest attachment in the world, and duty has the same charms for me, as favours might have for others In most men subjection is only an apparent docility, which, while it affects a submissive air stirs up inward murmurings, and with an humble look endeavours by a secret resistance, to preserve a remainder of liberty It is not the same with me Nature keeps nothing in reserve for it self when obedience comes in question the King's orders meet with no senti ments in my soul that do not either prevent them by Inclination or submit to them without constraint by Duty What severity soever I undergo I seek a comfort for my Sufferings in the good fortune of him who is the cause of them I alleviate the Hardships of my condition by the felicity of his and nothing can render me unhappy, since nothing can alter the prosperity of his affairs

14

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1667–8]

Your impatience for my return, increases mine, that I may have the pleasure to see you again · but you cannot entirely remove my apprehensions, that too earnest sollicitations with Monsieur *de Lionne*, the Minister, may render you less agreeable, and my Affair importuning. I ought to be so equitable, as to manage his good-will, and believe that the weighty Affairs that lie upon his hands, are somewhat more pressing than my own. Your activity for your Friends, gives me this suspicion, which, however, is not of long duration, for your address heartens me again, and persuades me, that you will always nick the time. I should have been very sorry that the Comparison of the Prince, the side-wind Letter, and the Character of *** should have been at the disposal of Monsieur *Barbin* [1] As for all the rest, your theft has made it yours, provided my Name do not appear in it; and I have no manner of share in it · so that the thing itself, and the management of it, depend upon you alone You are too reasonable to be so concern'd as you seem to be, at what I have writ to you about the Printers in Holland I had no other design

[1] Saint Evremond was neither more nor less concerned for the fate of his writings after they had left his pen, than the majority of "Gentlemen" writers, his contemporaries, in France and England The tradition that obtained among them was one of assumed indifference to the trade of writer as a commercial proposition The consequence was that a bookseller with an eye to the main chance would not hesitate to procure by fair means or foul (usually the latter), the manuscripts of any man, whose title or position at Court would guarantee a successful sale Nor would he scruple to pad out his pirated editions with the work of a hack-writer Saint Evremond's essays were constantly appearing in surreptitious, and often unrecognizable forms in Paris

in it, than to let you see how much I value the delicacy of so polite a style as yours for, in truth, no man can write better than you do

The new Writing of *Lisola* [1] was printed at Brussels, and only seven or eight Copies of it were brought to this place One of my Friends read it to me, but would not let me have it It is a continuation of Remarks on the Letter of Monsieur *de Lionne*, the Minister, wherein he endeavours to prove, that all the advances made at Paris towards Peace are only amusements, to hinder England and Holland from opposing the Conquest of the Netherlands, and maintains that the design of attacking Franche Comte, and that of making Peace, were inconsistent, drawing consequences from every thing There are some things very witty in his Remarks, but then

and Amsterdam, and their popularity was a constant source of irritation to the old man Whether he was justified in the present letter in suspecting his friend de Lionne of supplying Barbin with copy it is impossible to say though it seems unlikely The works which Barbin had printed, to which Saint Evremond refers were A Parallel between the Prince de Conde and M de Turenne [Works 1728 III 11] the Letter to the Marquis de Lionne [ibid I LXI] The Character of the Mareschal de Turenne [ibid III 1]

[1] Des Maizeaux comments as follows Francis Baron de Lisola born at Besançon betook himself to the Emperor s service who employ d him in several Embassies wherein he made himself very advantageously known During the War in Flanders the Garison of Lille having intercepted a Letter which M de Lionne [The Minister of State] wrote to the King M de Lisola publish d some remarks upon it De Lisola s most important work Le Bouclier d État et de Justice the last chapter of which deals with the conduct of the most Christian Princes during the war of 1667, certainly justifies Saint Evremond s criticism of its author as being witty in his Remarks he condemns for instance the writings of his adversaries as mere *creme fouettée* (whipped cream) [*v* Bayle s Dictionary 1734 Art Bourgogne II 114 (c)] [See also Arlington s Letters to Sir William Temple 1701 under the year 1667 De Lisola s name is misprinted throughout as de Isola]

there are too many jests, for so important a matter. The Spaniards cannot avoid accepting the alternative, England and Holland being the Umpires of the Peace; but the Marquis *de Castel Rodrigo* [1] wishes for nothing more than the continuation of the War, which will bring the English and Dutch into his party. They very much wish for Peace here, but neglect nothing that regards the War.

I am very much oblig'd to Monsieur *Corneille* for the honour he does me. His Letter [2] is admirable, and I know not whether he writes better in Verse than in Prose. I desire you to deliver my Answer [2] to him, and to assure him, that no man in the world has so great an esteem for anything that comes from him, as my self. I have read neither *Amphitryon* [3] nor *Laodice*,[4] but as I cast my eyes by chance upon the latter, the Verses have kept up my attention longer than I thought: [5] I desire you to return the Author thanks, in my name, for sending me his Piece, which I shall

[1] The Marquis de Castel Rodrigo (died 1668), was Governor of the Spanish Netherlands

[2] *v* Letters 22 and 23

[3] Moliere's comedy "Amphitryon" was written in 1667 and produced on the 13th of January 1668. It was, at one time, supposed to have been written to flatter and condone the King's liaison with Mme de Montespan. The fact that the liaison had not been made public at that date, and that Plautus, whom, says Saint Evremond in his postcript, Moliere had surpassed, had also written an "Amphitruo," explodes the legend.

[4] Laodice (1668), a tragedy by Thomas Corneille, the younger brother (by nineteen years) of Pierre Corneille. Living in the same house as his illustrious brother, he succeeded in writing thirty-two plays, and winning, in spite of his handicap, a place among the playrights of his age.

[5] After the words "longer than I thought," the following additional sentence was printed by Raguenet in 1700: "*Songe-t-on que l'amour se déguise?* [from "Laodice"] "There's nothing so well conceived and so happily expressed as that." Des Maizeaux and Planhol omit these words from their editions, Giraud includes them.

read very carefully and without doubt with great pleasure You shall have no Compliments for your self, for a well established friendship rejects whatever looks like ceremony

P S Since this Letter was written I read an Act of *Laodice*, which seems to me very fine

Molière surpasses *Plautus* in his *Amphitryon*, as well as *Terence* in his other Plays

LETTER 14 [Works 1728 II 30]

15

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE [1]

[1668]

SIR,

If I could discharge all the obligations you have laid on me, by thanks, I would most humbly return you a thousand, but since the least of the pains you have taken for me, is worth more than all the compliments in the world, I would have you to quit scores with your self, by the pleasure which a Man of honour finds in obliging others You ll say, perhaps, I am ungrateful if I am, 'tis not, at least, after the ordinary rate, and knowing as I do, the delicacy of your taste, I believe I shall please you more by a refin d Ingratitude, than by too common a Gratitude If by misfortune this way of dealing should not please you, justify me your self and by what you have done for me, judge of my grateful sense, which indeed is such as it ought to be Whatever be the success of your endeavours,

[1] The Comte de Lionne First Master of the Horse of the King s Great Stable and nephew by his mother of the Marquis de Lionne became acquainted with Saint Evremond in Holland He was proud of an acquaintance with Saint Evremond writes Des Maizeaux and assur d him that as soon as he return d to France he would do him all the good offices in his power

I shall always be infinitely oblig'd to you; and the good intentions of those who would do me service, are ever very agreable and acceptable to me, altho' they prove not successful.

As for the Papers you mention, they are entirely at your disposal, for nothing belongs to us with more Right, than what we get by our Industry. Your dexterity in making this theft, deserv'd a better recompense, by making you light on something more curious. 'Tis impossible to tell me more ingeniously than you do, that *Emilia* [1] is not much liked by the Ladies of Paris. To speak the truth, she's somewhat Dutch-built: her Plumpness enclines me to think that she drinks foggy beer; [2] and her Devotion, that she carries her Bible under her arm every Sunday. I beg of you not to give any body a copy of the little Pieces I send you, except the *Letter* which the Prince *de Turenne* has ask'd of you, in order to serve me, and which you had done well to have given him before now. I have made some additions to the *Dissertation* on Monsieur *Racine's Alexander*, which make it appear to me more tolerable than when you saw it.[3] If the

[1] *That Emilia is not much liked* Emilia was not, as Giraud supposed, a lady-friend whom Saint Evremond had met in Holland The point is that "she never was, nor ever will be found" In fact she never existed except as an imaginary creation Saint Evremond had written an ideal "Character" of Emilia, the "Woman that never was, nor ever will be found" [Works, 1728 I 208], and it was this impossibly virtuous and faultless creature that had roused the jealousy of the "Ladies of Paris"

[2] An obsolete term, formerly applied to ale, etc, which was thick and full of floating particles [N E D]

[3] In 1666, Saint Evremond collected some notes he had made on Racine's tragedy, "Alexander the Great," which Moliere had produced the year before In 1668 he added to them and sent them to his friend Madame Bourneau [see note, Letter 21] with the title "A Dissertation on Racine's Tragedy called Alexander the Great" [Works, 1728 I 232] Although a staunch admirer of Corneille, he paid a pretty



' An agreeable and ingenious Physiognomy
Des Maizeaux

Earl of *St Albans* [1] desires to see what's in your hands, you may gratify his curiosity for I have not one thought, that I would not trust him with

I should extremely rejoice to see the Marquis *de Coeuvres's* Son [2] married with a Daughter of the Marquis *de Lionne*, Minister of State having always been a very humble Servant of both the Fathers But when I consider that I saw the Marquis *de Coeuvres* married and his Son with his Bib, come to the Bishop of *Laon* [3] whom he call'd *Papa*, to bid him *Good Morrow* I make a melancholy reflection on my age and lifting up my eyes to Heaven, with a shrug of the shoulders, I sing tho not so agreably as *Noblet*,

Mais hélas ! quand l'Age nous glace
Nos beaux jours ne reviennent jamais [4]

But oh ! when Age benumbs our veins
No longer sprightly Joy remains

compliment to the younger dramatist in the first lines of the essay Since I have read Alexander the Great the old age of Corneille [he was sixty years old in 1666] does not so much alarm me and I am not apprehensive that the writing of Tragedies will end with him Dryden spoke of the Dissertation as an admirable piece of criticism [*v* his preface to Miscellaneous Essays of Saint Evremond 1692]

[1] Henry Jermyn (d 1684) created Earl of Saint Albans at the Restoration ambassador to the Court of France where he arranged the marriage of Charles II with Katherine of Braganza He was still in Paris when this letter was written negotiating the first of the secret treaties between Louis and Charles which was signed in 1667 For his later years see note Letter 66

[2] Jean d'Estrées Admiral of France (1624–1707) son of François Annibal d'Estrees Marquis de Coeuvres Marshal of France (1573–1670)

[3] The Bishop of Laon was later Cardinal d'Estrees Des Maizeaux comments as follows on the Bishop's greeting We should say in English Ask his Blessing but that custom is not used in France

[4] Molière La Pastorale comique 6me entree

The report goes here, as well as at Paris, that the Peace is made with Portugal:[1] but this news comes from Madrid, and the Portuguese Ambassador, with whom I play at Ombre every day, has no manner of account of it from Lisbon. Upon the credit that is given to this piece of news, he complains that Portugal is reckon'd for nothing; and this is his reasoning: *People*, says he, *believe the Peace is made, because they know Spain offers us every thing, but who knows whether we will accept, even this offer? I doubt, whatever comes from the Castilians, and will believe nothing, till I have advice from Lisbon.* He has dispatched an express thither about it, and concerning his business in this Country. The Elector of Cologne is *incognito* at Amsterdam, and the Prince of Tuscany[2] will arrive there in few days. The Prince of Strasburgh[3] is at the Hague, giving it out, that there will be a Peace; but few will give credit to him; upon a firm belief, that before the Spaniards are come to a full resolution to treat, the Armies will be in the field. Do not envy them the honour of losing patiently they let us gain what we will, for by their familiarity with misfortunes, they do not stir much to prevent them.

This is all you shall have of me at present. What you ask of me, out of civility, to shew, I suppose,

[1] Peace between Spain and Portugal was concluded on the 15th of February 1668 For notes on the Portuguese Ambassador, Don Francisco de Melos, and on Ombre, the card-game, see Letters 49–50 and 52 respectively

[2] The Prince of Tuscany came on a visit to the Hague early in 1668 Des Maizeaux relates that "as he designed to make some stay, he hired a house there, in which Saint Evremond had an appartment, as well as some other persons of Quality, who thereupon were obliged to look for other lodgings Saint Evremond was preparing to remove like the rest, but that Prince not only desired him to stay, but likewise to use his Table whilst he continued at the Hague He has ever since honoured him with his esteem, and sent him a Present of the best Wines in Italy every year" [*v* Letter 130]

[3] i e François Egon de Furstemberg.

that you remember my trifles at the Hague, is in such ill order, and so ill written, that you could not so much as read it, and, besides, I have good breeding enough to save you the tiresomeness it would give you There are, indeed, some things which I like well enough, but then there are many others to be left out If you desire to have the Observations I have made on some Latin Historians, I will send them to you

I entreat you to return my hearty thanks to M What esteem soever you may have for him, you would value him still more if you knew him as well as I do Farewell Sir, I am by nature so grateful that I cannot, either by design or study, become an ingrate, and whatever was my resolution, at the beginning of this Letter I cannot end it, without assuring you, I shall, as long as I live, remember the obligations you have laid on me I wish it may be a long time

But oh! when Age benumbs our veins
No longer sprightly Joy remains

If you did not value your self more upon having arms and legs to be broken in the war, than on writing I should tell you, your Letter is as finely writ as it can be

LETTER 15 [Works 1728 I 214]

16

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1668]

Nothing is so agreeable to Friendship, as well as Love as the demonstrations of a true Affection, which cannot be better express'd than by bearing a part in the misfortunes of those we love Your concern for the miscarriage of my Affair, takes off one half of my own, and puts me in a condition to bear the other patiently I knew nothing of what you write to me,

none of my Friends having been forward, no more than your self, in sending me a melancholy piece of news:[1] but this discretion, as obliging as it is, gives me to understand, that they have but an ill opinion of my Constancy Seven full years of Misfortunes ought at least to have inur'd me to Sufferings, if they have not been able to form in me a Virtue superior to them. To end a moral Discourse, impertinent in him that makes it, and too severe for him we entertain, I'll tell you, in few words, that I should have been glad to see again the pleasantest Country I know of, and some Friends, as dear to me for the demonstrations of their Friendship, as in consideration of their merit. However, a man must not be driven to despair, because he lives in a Nation where delights are scarce. I content my self with Indolence, where I cannot enjoy Pleasures. I had still five or six years to relish Plays, Musick, and Good-cheer, and I must take up with Policy, Order, and Œconomy; and form to my self a languishing amusement from the contemplation of the grave Dutch Vertues You will oblige me to return a thousand most humble thanks to Monsieur *de Lionne*, the Minister, for his kindness to me. I am so unprofitable a Servant, that I dare not even mention Gratitude; but I am not the less sensible of the Obligation. You will oblige me likewise, to acquaint me with the state of my Affairs, and what answer has been return'd. Your Letter will certainly be receiv'd in the packet of Monsieur *d'Estrades*[2] when he is here. As for the Airs and Novelties, I will not put him to so much charge for Postage: but pray send me nothing

[1] The "melancholy piece of news" to which Saint Evremond refers, was the failure of his friends to obtain the King's pardon and permission for him to return to "the pleasantest Country I know of"

[2] D'Estrades, the French Ambassador at the Hague, in whose post-bag Saint Evremond's letters were included to avoid the heavy charges of the public service.

but what you like very well, either in Musick, or of any other kind As for those Trifles with which I amus'd my self now and then, I have nothing but about one half of a discourse, which is not yet copied fair About a year ago, the fancy took me to treat of *Interest in Persons altogether corrupted, the too rigid Virtue, and the sense of a Man of Honour, who keeps a Medium, and draws from both what ought to enter the Commerce of the world* I had left those Papers [1] in England, and found them lost except some Periods of the last writing I shall endeavour to make them up again, but as they have too great a connexion with those that are lost, I believe the whole will be but indifferent

LETTER 16 [Works 1728 II 3.]

17

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1668]

SIR,

If you do me the honour to write to me, pray let us leave out this *Sir* and all other ceremony that cramps the freedom of a commerce by Letters I

[1] The papers which are mentioned here are printed among Saint Evremond's Works Interest in Persons altogether Corrupted [Works 1728 II 34] The Too Rigid Virtue [ibid II 38] The Sense of an honest experienced Courtier upon Rigid Virtue and Base Interest [ibid II 42] There seems to be some confusion in Saint Evremond's mind regarding their date About a year ago would be about 1667–1668 on the strength of the statement at the beginning of the letter Seven full years of Misfortunes He had gone into exile at the end of 1661 and had left England for Holland in 1665 There are two solutions of this unimportant difficulty either that Saint Evremond meant about three years ago that is to say while he was still in England where he mislaid the papers or that he had begun about a year ago to re write them

must desire you, in the next place, not to jeer at me as you do, by the excessive commendations you bestow on trifles. They were the result of idleness, on which I set no other value, than with relation to the amusement they afford me, during some very tedious and melancholy hours. I wish they may prove likewise an amusement to you: and, such as they are, I'll not fail sending you, by the next post, the *Observations on Sallust and Tacitus*,[1] which I mention'd to you. The first ascribes all to the natural Constitution. With him all events are the effects of mens Tempers; wherefore 'tis his chiefest care to give us a true knowledge of men, by the admirable Characters he has left us. The other turns all into Politicks, and makes a mystery of every thing, ascribing all to craft and address, and little or nothing to a man's Constitution. I then consider how difficult it is, to find in the same Person, a perfect knowledge of men, and a profound skill in business; and in eight or ten lines I shew, that Monsieur *de Lionne*, the Minister, has reconcil'd two qualifications, generally divided, which are found in him in the highest perfection. It is so excessive cold, that for an Empire I would not write a sheet of paper. I'll send you also the *Dissertation on Alexander*, in my opinion, much more tolerable than as

[1] *Observations on Sallust and Tacitus* [Works, 1728 I 228]. Saint Evremond, at the earnest request of the Comte de Lionne, had sent him a copy of this short dissertation which had been addressed, in the first place, to Isaac Vossius, a friend of Evremond's at the Hague and afterwards in England where he became a canon of Windsor. Le Clerc, in his "Bibliothèque choisie IX 328" praises it as highly as the Comte de Lionne. "If our Grammarians, he says, knew how to discourse and write after this manner on the Antients, they would make everybody fond to study them, but their learning consisting only in the knowledge of Words, Customs, and, at most, of Chronology, added to a blind admiration of all they read, gives Gentlemen a disgust for Literature."

you have it This is all I can do, in return for all your favours

I am very much oblig'd to you for sending me Monsieur *Cornelle's* Translation of the little Latin Poem on the King's Conquests [1] I should highly commend the Latin, were I not in conscience bound to commend the French more Our Language is more majestick than the Latin and the Verses more harmonious, if I may use that expression But 'tis no wonder, that he who has added strength and majesty to *Lucan s* thoughts, should have the same advantage over a modern Latin Author However, I admire more what *Cornelle* has done himself on the King s Return, than his Translation, as admirable as it is I never saw anything finer If we had a Poem of that strength I should not much value the *Homers*, the *Virgils* and the *Tassos* I account it one of the King s prosperities the having a person, who can so worthily speak of his great Actions

I desire you to assure Monsieur *de Lionne* of my most humble respects I doubt not but he will be so kind, as to employ his good Offices in my favour when occasion offers, and I expect from you a discreet and well tim'd sollicitation not to importune him, but now and then to put him in mind of the Affair of your most humble and most obedient servant

Monsieur *Van Beuninghen* [2] goes Ambassador extra-

[1] Corneille had translated into French verse a Latin panegyric, written by Father de la Rue on the Victories of the King in Flanders in the year 1667

[2] Van Beuninghen Ambassador to the French Court reached Paris in February 1668 *v* Instructions for Monsieur Van Beuninghen going in quality of Ambassador Extraordinary from the Estates General to his most Christian Majesty [Arlington s Letters to Temple London 1701] Burnet says he was a man of great notions but talked perpetually so that it was not possible to convince him in discourse at least He had a wonderful vivacity but too much levity in his thoughts He had great knowledge in all Sciences

ordinary to France; and 'twould be very well for me, if I could return with him.

LETTER 17 [Works, 1728. I 218]

18

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1668]

I should have great excuses to make to you, for not sending what I promis'd, if it was worth it: but I am ingenious in delaying your being tir'd by my trifles; wherein I give you a nice proof of my friendship. However, I shall overlook your interest and mine by transmitting to you the Pieces that are now transcribing. I address one of them to Monsieur *Vossius*,[1] my literary friend, and with whom there's more to be learn'd, than with any man I ever saw in my life. I'll tell you, in the mean time, that I write to Men of the Sword and Courtiers, as a Wit and a Scholar; and that I converse with the Learned, as a Man that has been a Soldier, and seen the World.

As to the frank Acknowledgment of my Fault, which you mention, I should not have fail'd to make it; if I had design'd to shew what you stole from me. No body knows better than you, how far that was from my thoughts. You will oblige me, by letting me know, whether I may entertain any hopes of returning to France, or must resolve to pass the remainder of my days in foreign Countries? Hope is the source, or at least one of the first causes of uneasiness, and

and had such a copiousness of invention, with such a pleasantness, as well as a variety of conversation, that I have often compared him to the Duke of Buckingham" [History of His Own Times" Oxford, 1833 I 604]

[1] The piece addressed to Vossius was "Observations on Sallust and Tacitus" [*v* note, Letter 17]

uneasiness is tolerable in Love only, where 'tis even pleasurable for you know the song

Pains of Love are sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are

everywhere else disquiet is a great torment We have not here *Corneille's Attila* [1] you'll oblige me to send it me, with some of *Molière's* Plays if there be any new ones for the works of those two Writers, are the only objects of my curiosity The Antients taught *Corneille* to think well, and he thinks better than they The other learnt from them the art of making, in Comedy, excellent draughts of the Men and Manners of his Age which had not before been seen on our Stage I am insensibly become learned in your company I am just now going to receive a Visit from Monsieur *Vossius*, to whom I shall talk of the War in Flanders Farewell, Sir I first banish'd a tedious ceremony, I desire you not to take it ill

I forgot to desire you to assure the Comte *de Gramont* that I am overjoy'd to see him the Protector of the House of *Gramont*

LETTER 18 [Works 1728 I 220]

[1] *Corneille's Attila* Attila (1667) one of the latest of Corneille's plays failed through the complication of its plot Boileau's famous epigram on this play may be translated

At *Agesilas* our faces drop
At *Attila* we cry out Stop!

Molière at this time was at the height of his fame Le Misanthrope and the Medecin malgre lui had been produced in 1666 Tartuffe was acted in public for the first time in 1668

[2] Des Marzeaux supplies a note to this recondite message The Comte de Guiche having been a long time in exile at last obtain'd leave to return to France by the Comte de Gramont's interest The pleasantry of Saint Evremond's expression runs on the Comte de Gramont's performing what the Mareschal his brother had several times unsuccess

19

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1668]

You are none of those who endeavour more to satisfy themselves, as to the honesty of their conduct towards their Friends, than to bring their Affairs to a good issue. Your first care of mine laid obligations enough on me: but your perseverance, and all the industrious pains you take, give me a sort of shame; and I should not easily suffer them, if I did not think they may put me in a condition to come and shew you my gratitude. You know nothing is equal to the tenderness of a man in disgrace, I am naturally pretty sensible of the favours done me; judge what ill fortune adds to this good disposition. Of the temper, and in the condition I am, I give my self over to the impression your generosity has made on me, and 'tis my most soft and tender Pleasure to be touch'd by it: but sometimes ungrateful reflections would biass my Judgment; and it comes into my head to examine coolly the obligations I have to you. I swear to you, in good earnest, that after having consider'd all you do for me, I wonder how an acquaintance, which came about by chance, could produce such eager concern in you, for the Interest of a new Friend.

It seems as if, by a secret justice, the Relations of Monsieur *de Lionne* would acknowledge the great esteem and veneration I always had for him. The Marquis *de Leissens Lionne*,[1] on his return from Hol-

fully attempted" He might have added that the Comte de Guiche was Armand de Gramont (1638–1673), who inherited from his great-grandmother, "La Belle Corisande," a reputation for gallantry, and from her lover, Henry IV, the reputation of a brave and skillful general

[1] The Marquis de Leissens Lionne, a cousin of the Comte de Lionne and nephew of the Marquis de Lionne, Minister for Foreign Affairs

land, made my business his own but your warmth in it still surpasses his I hope you will inspire the Marquis *de* with a disposition to favour me, and that at last, his Father's good offices will have the good effect you have prepar'd You can't imagine how sensibly I am affected with the new favour the Marquis *de* has receiv'd, which is owing to the great services of the Father and the great hopes that are justly entertain'd of the Son, I mean the hopes of the services that are expected from him, for as to his merit, it is already grown to perfection, and there's no need of expecting any thing farther on that side

I had scarce leisure to cast my eyes on *Andromache*,[1] and *Attila* however, by the cursory view I had of them, it appears to me that *Andromache* has in it something very fine and that 'tis but one degree remov d from the Great Those who shall not go to the bottom will admire it, but those who are looking for perfect Beauties, will miss something in it, that shall hinder them from being fully satisfied You have reason to say, that that Piece has lost much by the death of *Montfleury* for it wants great Tragedians, to make up

[1] Andromaque' the tragedy which established Racine s reputation was produced for the first time in 1667 La Place in his Pieces Interessantes [Brusselles 1790 t 8] prints some curious verses attributed to Racine in which the effect of his Andromaque on Saint Evremond s friends Crequi (who did not like women) and d Olonne (who was not liked by his wife) is wittily described

La Vraisemblance est choquee en ta Pièce
Si l on en croit et d Olonne et Créqui
Crequi dit que Pyrrhus aimne trop sa maitresse
D Olonne qu Andromaque n aimne trop son mari

[2] Zacharie Montfleury the celebrated tragedian was born in 1600 He acted in Corneille s Cid and Horace ' His reputation was only equalled by his inordinate vanity His death in 1667 was attributed by popular legend to the violence he displayed in the part of Orestes in Racine s Andromaque The truth is that he fell ill after a performance and never recovered

its defects by Action. But, take it all together, it is a fine piece, and very much above the Indifferent, tho' somewhat below the Great. *Attila*, on the contrary, must have got something by the death of *Montfleury*: for a great Tragedian, (as he was) would have strain'd too high a part, which is full enough of it self, and his ferocity would have made too great an impression on tender souls. Not but that Tragedy had been admired in the time of *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, when fierce and bloody representations were more relish'd, than the soft and tender. All the Thoughts are just; and I found some excellent Verses in it. As for the Fable, or Plot of those two Pieces, I had not time to make the least reflection upon it.

I wish, with all my heart, that *Corneille*, may handle the subject of *Hannibal*; and if he can bring into his piece the Conference he had with *Scipio* before the Battle, I fancy he will make them speak like the greatest men in the world, as they were indeed. I send you herewith the *Observations on Sallust*, which I mention'd before; and I will shortly send you the *Dissertation upon Alexander*, both indifferently transcrib'd. As for the Characters, they are so interwoven with the *Conversation with Monsieur de Candale*,[1] that they are inseparable from it, and I cannot yet send that piece. Farewell: love me always; and believe I am yours, more than any body's else

I know not whether Monsieur *de Lionne* will be thought to be as polite, as nice, and as much a man of pleasure as he is When these qualities produce nothing but a soft Idleness, they suit but ill with a Minister of State; but when a profound Statesman,

[1] This was an account of a conversation that had taken place between Saint Evremond and the Duc de Candale (1627–1658) the lover of the Comtesse d'Olonne, about the year 1650 Saint Evremond wrote it as a relief for his melancholy when Lord d'Aubigny died [see note, Letter 13] It is printed in his Works, 1728 II 1

consummate in Business, can so master them, as to put himself above them, and procure to himself besides, some agreeable, and even voluptuous Leisure, his merit in my opinion, reaches the highest degree of perfection [1]

LETTER 19 [Works 1728 I 221]

20

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1668]

I know not yet what success your endeavours to serve me will have, but I can assure you, they make a deep impression on a man, who is very sensible of the least obligation that is laid upon him I am more concern'd at your Illness, for the trouble it brings upon you, than by the hinderance it gives to your sollicitation in my Affair I am apprehensive they may be somewhat too pressing, with respect to the Prince *de Turenne*,[2] and that I may become at last obnoxious

[1] The last paragraph is omitted in all the early editions doubtless as a measure of discretion towards the de Lionne family Henri de la Tour d Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne (1611–1675) the great French commander under whom Saint Evremond had served at Fribourg and Nordlingen Saint Evremond says Des Maizeaux signaliz d himself in the Army by his Politeness and by his Wit as much as by his Bravery which qualities not always meeting in soldiers gained him the esteem of the Mareschals d Estrées and Gramont Viscount Turenne etc and of the Mareschal de Créqui who also became a Mareschal of France He had a share in their confidence and as long as they lived they gave him marks of a sincere friendship which to the last was unalterable After the Fronde Turenne s reputation at Court declined on account of the influence of his enemies Colbert and Tellier and his good offices effected nothing [*v* The Character of the Mareschal de Turenne Works 1728 III 1 and A Parallel between the Prince de Condé and M de Turenne as to what relates to War *Ibid* III 11]

to him, by the importunity I give him. If he had not sent me a Compliment by the Comte *d'Auvergne*,[1] and the Comte *d'Estrades*,[2] I would not have taken the liberty to desire his good offices, for I never did him any service that may oblige him to concern himself in my behalf. If I admir'd him all my lifetime, 'twas only to do justice to his great Qualities, and to credit my own judgment: but I never expected any thing from him, because, indeed, I had no pretensions to any thing. If he be so kind, as to be willing to oblige me, I shall be extremely grateful; but if I am indifferent to him, I shall have no manner of reason to complain.

The kindness which you assure me the Marquis *de Lionne* has for me, gives me a secret satisfaction, far greater than I ought to enjoy in my present condition. If I was fully persuaded of it, it would take up my whole attention, and agreeably divert my thoughts from my ill fortune. In what place soever I may be, pray assure him, that he will have in me a very unprofitable servant against my will, and no less zealous than your self, in every thing that concerns him. This, I think, is the most emphatical way I can use to express my sentiments.

Pray moderate the excessive Praise you bestow on my Trifles. At the time when you shew so much sincerity in solid things, and real services, you have not the same frankness in telling me your opinion of what I send you. I might, with more reason, tell you, that your Letter is the best written that ever I saw; but I am afraid to injure your reputation, in a nice Country, where a man cannot write much, and write well, without passing for a Pedant, or for an Author.

Your *Andromache* is very fine: three of my friends

[1] Turenne's brother

[2] Godefroy, Comte d'Estrades (1607–1686), French Ambassador at the Hague, and later one of the plenipotentiaries at the Treaty of Nimeguen

sent me one each by the Post, without considering how frugal a man ought to be in a Commonwealth 'Tis not the Money I regard, but if the Burgomasters were acquainted with this lavishness, they would turn me out of Holland, like a Man who might corrupt their Citizens You are better acquainted with a popular State, when you free me from those expenses which you lay very judiciously on the Ambassador,[1] whom it becomes extremely well to scatter his money for the honour of his Master and the dignity of the Crown Nevertheless, as those little things are reprinted in Amsterdam, eight or ten days after they come out in France I would not put the Ambassador to so considerable expense for Postage too frequently Those that sent me *Andromache* have desir'd my opinion of it as I told you before, it appear d to me very beautiful, but I think that Passions may be carried farther, and that there is in the Sentiments something deeper than what's to be found in it for what ought to be tender is only soft, and what ought to excite pity raises nothing but tenderness However, take him altogether *Racine* deserves the highest reputation, next to *Corneille*[2]

LETTER 20 [Works 1728 I 244]

21

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1668]

If it were true as you tell me that Monsieur *de Lionne* the Minister of State, should like those little

[1] i e the Comte d Estrades [*v supra*]

[2] There is a generosity in this criticism hardly to be expected from a man who blindly admired the works of the older dramatist and who viewed with dismay the rising fame of his successor [*v* note Letter 22]

Pieces I have sent you, the pleasure of hitting so nice a palate as his, would easily drown the grief of my Disgrace; and I should think my self obliged to the misfortune of being an Exile, in which condition, for want of Diversions, I amuse my self with trifles of this nature. If he be not satisfied with the Picture I have made of his accomplishments, he must lay the blame on his own merit, which I could not be so happy as to express well. Why is he a man of so much ability and probity? I had rather find in him more capacity and nicety than I bestow upon him, than to make him more able, or more nice, than I should find him. It fares with him, as with those Women of extraordinary Beauty, in whose Pictures there is ever something wanting, and who ought to be overjoy'd to ruin the reputation of all Painters.

Madame *Bourneau*[1] has serv'd me a very scurvy

[1] Madame Bourneau, to whom Saint Evremond had addressed his "Dissertation on Racine's Alexander the Great," was the wife of a President in the Seneschalship of Saumur. In the summer of 1664 [Des Maizeaux incorrectly says 1665] she accompanied Madame de Comminges [Sibylle d'Amalbi, the "précieuse Césonie" and an old friend of Saint Evremond's] to England, where the latter's husband had been appointed Ambassador of France. It appears that she had allowed a garbled version of the Dissertation to get into print, the "scurvy trick" to which Saint Evremond refers. Des Maizeaux comments as follows: "Saint Evremond sent also to M. de Lionne the Dissertation . . . desiring him to communicate it to none but his intimate friends, and above all things not to suffer it to be copied out. But M. de Lionne acquainted him, that that Piece was abroad in manuscript, and that Barbin, a Bookseller at Paris, was about printing it, with some other Works that were affirmed to be his, adding, that M. de Racine's friends were extremely dissatisfied with that Critical Dissertation, being apprehensive that it would do him an injury." And he adds: "'Tis very probable, that M. de Lionne had no manner of share in the Edition of some of Saint Evremond's Works, that came out about that time, for he would not have suffer'd them to be so mangled as they were."

trick, in shewing a very confus'd sketch I had sent her about the Tragedy of *Alexander*. This Woman, whom I often convers'd with in England and who had a great deal of sound wit, sent me that Piece of *Racine*, with a desire to give her my Judgment upon it, which I did, in haste, without allowing my self sufficient time to peruse that Play with attention. I desir'd her, as earnestly as possible, not to shew my Letter: but being less scrupulous than your self in following the advice of Friends, I find she has shewn it to all the world, and has now brought me into the perplexity you mention. I hate extremely to see my Name toss'd about, particularly with things of this nature. I am unacquainted with *Racine*: but as he is a great Wit, I wish it were in my power to serve him, and yet his greatest enemies could not have done worse, than what I have done without design. However, Sir, if, as you tell me, 'tis not possible to hinder the printing of those collected Pieces, 'tis better they should be printed by the Copy you have, and as correctly as possible, than in such a confusion, as they have been handed about to the Printer: but, pray, take care that my Name be not put to them.

I don't desire you to communicate to any body the side wind Justification[1] of what I wrote at St John de-Luz: you know the reason of it as well as my self. I intended to praise him who is now on the Throne, but I know not whether my Praises are acceptable. Neither will you, I hope, part with the little Character, which you did but imperfectly copy out, as for the rest, it is wholly yours and you may use it as you please. You would oblige me, however, to take

[1] The side wind Justification of what I wrote at St John de Luz was the Letter (No 13) which Saint Evremond had sent in 1667 to the Marquis de Lionne Minister for Foreign Affairs to be shown to the King as a justification for the fatal letter (No 9) to Crequi criticizing The Treaty of the Pyrenees

special care that nothing of it be printed: but, in case you cannot prevent it, I leave it entirely to your management and discretion.

Your Letters are so polite and delicate, that the Printers of this Country, who are no less eager than those of France, would not fail to dun me for them, if they knew I had any thing so ingenious, and so nicely writ. In truth, no man can write better than you do, nor act so well in a friend's concern. As desirous as I am to see France again, I would not have return'd before I had been acquainted with you, both because it is very uncommon to find so careful and so affectionate a Friend, and upon the score of your agreeable Correspondence. As for the Praises of *Attila*, you make 'em more ingenious than I intended 'em. The truth is, that Piece is less fitted to the taste of your Court, than to that of Antiquity; but I think it extremely fine.

Here are abundance of trifles, which I would not have ventured upon, if the confidence of a very strict Friendship did not admit the smallest matters in a familiar intercourse.

LETTER 21 [Works, 1728 I 246]

22

MONSIEUR CORNEILLE TO SAINT EVREMOND TO RETURN HIM THANKS FOR THE PRAISES HE HAD BESTOWED UPON HIM, IN THE DISSERTATION ON RACINE'S ALEXANDER.

[1668]

SIR,

The obligation I have to you, is of such a nature as never to be worthily acknowledg'd by Thanks; and I am in such confusion about it, that I should still take up with silence, were I not apprehensive it should pass with you for Ingratitude. Altho' such weighty

Applause as yours ought to be extreme dear to us, there are yet conjunctures which infinitely raise the price of it You honour me with your esteem at a time when there seems to be a Party form'd to rob me of all You support me, when they fancy they have thrown me down, and you give me a noble comfort for the niceness of our Age, when you vouchsafe to allow me the true taste of Antiquity This is a wonderful advantage for a man, who cannot doubt that Posterity will depend upon your Judgment and after this, I must freely own to you, that I think I have some right to treat as ridiculous those vain Trophies that are erected upon the imaginary ruins of mine, and to look down with pity on those obstinate prepossessions that were entertain'd for antient Heroes, new cast after our fashion

Will you give me leave to add, in this place, that you have hit my weak-side, and that my *Sophonisba*, for whom you show so much tenderness has the best part of my own? How agreeably you flatter my Sentiments, when you confirm what I have advanc d about the share which Love ought to have in noble Tragedies, and with what fidelity we ought to preserve to those illustrious Antients, those Characters of their Time, Nation, and Humour! I have hitherto been of opinion, that Love was a Passion attended with too much weakness to be predominant in an Heroick Piece I would have it to be the Ornament but not the Substance, and that great Souls should not be affected by it, any farther than it is consistent with nobler Impressions Our Beaux and merry Sparks are of a contrary opinion but since you declare for mine, tis a sufficient reason for me to be extremely beholden to you, and ever to profess my self

SIR,

Your most humble and
most obedient Servant,
CORNEILLE

LETTERS 22 and 23 [Works, 1728 II 26 and 28] These two letters are of considerable interest for the light they throw on contemporary drama Saint Evremond and Madame de Sévigné were firm supporters of Corneille against the cabal of younger critics who saw in Racine's plays evidence of a greater and more "refined" genius Corneille was bitterly jealous of his rival's success, which was all the more pronounced because it coincided with a marked decline in his own powers, while Racine, on his side, did not omit to pass some ungenerous remarks on the older dramatist Saint Evremond stated the case, for and against Racine, with admirable lucidity and fairness, in his "Dissertation on Alexander the Great," which is mentioned several times in his letters to de Lionne His chief complaints are that Racine had not made enough use of the romantic material at his disposal, and that instead of exalting (in the Cornelian tradition) the Heroic virtues of his heroes, he had softened their characters by involving them in love-affairs "I could have wished, he says, that our author had given us a greater idea of war a prodigious army . . terrible chariots and elephants lightening, thunder and tempests in short, a hundred dreadful things . . ought have raised the imagination of the poet, both in the description of the preparations, and the recital of the battle" Saint Evremond is here giving a recipe for romantic drama, of the Drury Lane variety, not for a tragedy As M de Julleville justly remarks [Le Théâtre en France 152] "the faithful reproduction of a lost civilization may be an archeological masterpiece, on the stage it would be simply cold, uninteresting, and unimpressive"

Saint Evremond had better reason to complain of Racine's use of Love in his tragedies "Above all things," he says of tragic Heroes, "we ought not to inspire the reputation of their Genius in War, to render them more illustrious in their Amours We may give them Mistresses of our own inventing, we may mix passion with their glory but let us take care of making an Antony of Alexander; and not ruin a Hero, confirm'd for so many ages, merely to favour a Lover of our own creating." It was this point that appealed most to Corneille, the creator of Heroic drama, and in his letter to Saint Evremond he does not fail to express his gratitude to him for making it

23

SAINT EVREMOND'S ANSWER TO MONSIEUR CORNEILLE

[1668]

SIR,

I don't doubt but you would be the most thankful person in the world, if one should do you any good Office, since you think your self obliged for the Justice which has been done you If you were to thank all those who have the same opinion of your Works with my self, you must return acknowledgments to all those that understand them I can assure you, that no man's Reputation was ever so well establish'd as yours is in England and Holland The English, who are naturally prone enough to value any thing of their own renounce that opinion, tho' often well grounded, and think they do sufficient honour to their *Ben Jonson*, by calling him the *English Corneille* *Mr Waller*, one of the greatest Wits of the Age, does still impatiently expect your new Plays, and fails not translating one or two Acts of them into English Verse, for his own satisfaction [1] You are the only man of our Nation,

[1] Edmund Waller the poet (1606–1687) a friend of Saint Evremond s during his first visit to England had collaborated with Sir Charles Sedley and the Earl of Dorset in a translation of Corneille s Pompey which was produced at the Duke of York s theatre and printed in 1664 *v* Letters of Orinda to Poliarchus 1705 I long to hear what becomes of the other Translation of Pompey and what opinion the Town and Court have of it I have laid out several ways to get a copy but cannot yet procure one except only of the first Act that was done by Mr Waller Orinda (Mrs Katherine Philips) had herself translated Corneille s Pompey and part of his 'Horace The Waller Sedley Dorset Pompey fell flat and there is an interesting allusion to its failure in The Session of the Poets [Poems on Affairs of State 1697]

My old Friend Mr Waller what make you there
Among those young Fellows that spoil the *French* plays?

Several other versions of Corneille s plays were produced

whose thoughts have the advantage to hit his He owns that they speak and write well in France; but of all the French, he says, that you alone know how to think. Monsieur *Vossius*, the greatest Admirer of Greece, who cannot bear the least comparison between the Grecians and the Latins, does yet prefer you before *Sophocles* and *Euripides*.

After the approbation of such great Men, you surprize me, to tell me that your Reputation is attack'd in France. Does it then fare with Good Taste, as with Fashions, which begin to settle among Foreigners, when they are old at Paris? I should not wonder to see them have some disgust for old Heroes, when we see a young one who eclipses all their Glory. but if we are still pleas'd to see them represented on our Theatres, how is it possible for them not to admire those you describe? I believe the influence of Ill Taste is upon the decline; and that the first Piece you shall give the Publick, will show, by the return of their former Applause, both the recovery of good sense, and the restoration of reason. I cannot conclude, without returning you most humble thanks for the honour you have done me. I should think my self unworthy of the praises you bestow on my Judgment; but as it is generally employ'd in finding out the Beauties of your Works, I confound our Interests, and with pleasure gratify a vanity mixt with the justice I do you.

LETTER 23 [*v* note, Letter 22]

after the Restoration Pepys attended performances, in English, of "Le Cid," "Heraclius," "Horace," and "Le Menteur"

24

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1669]

I am justly apprehensive, lest the continuance of our Correspondence may become troublesome to you, by reason of the continuance of my Disgrace which will oblige me for the future to retrench much of my own satisfaction not to abuse so warm a zeal as yours Discretion is a virtue that ought to be practis'd with true Friends, and I am too much concern'd to preserve you, not to use your friendship with circumspection If I durst, in this place, discover my soul to you you wou'd see it deeply affected with the kindness of the most disinterested friend in the world, since nothing but your own generosity maintains me in your affection which makes me believe that you have a mind to set an example to Posterity, which she must despair ever to be able to imitate In short, I examine my self every way, and find nothing in me but what justifies the disgust which others ought to entertain of my person Reflections would be very irksome to me were they not alleviated by the remembrance of a person for whom I have the same veneration, which so accomplished a merit gains him from every body

But I will no longer make so nice a Modesty as yours uneasy and therefore proceed to the Judgment you have ask'd of me upon *Britannicus*[1] I have read

[1] Racine's Britannicus belongs to the year 1669 In the preface to the edition of 1676 Racine himself writes Of all my plays this is the one to which the public and the Court return most willingly and if ever I wrote anything deserving of praise the critics for the most part agree that it is my Britannicus Saint Evremond who had disapproved of Racine's excessive use of love as a motive in his earlier plays naturally preferred Britannicus to Alexandre and Andromaque in spite of the black and horrible ideas on account of the cornelian treatment of its characters

it with attention enough to observe fine things in it. It exceeds, in my opinion, both *Alexander* and *Andromache*: the Verses of it are more magnificent, and I will not be surpriz'd if some Sublime be found in it. However, I deplore the misfortune of that Author, for having written so worthily upon a Subject which cannot afford an agreeable representation. And, indeed, the Characters of *Narcissus*, *Agrippina* and *Nero*; and the black and horrible idea which is entertain'd of their Crimes, cannot be effaced from the memory of the Spectators; and whatever efforts he can make to shake off the thoughts of their Cruelties, the horror he has for them, does in some measure destroy the merit of the Play.

I do not despair of this new Genius, since the *Dissertation on Alexander* has had the effect of correcting him One cannot but wish him always as discreet as he is in the wonderful presentation of the Characters in *Britannicus*. We may one day expect him to come pretty near to Monsieur *de Corneille*.[1]

LETTER 24 [Works, 1728. II 24]

25

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1669]

SIR,

Perhaps you are not at Paris: perhaps you are, and in this last case, your silence may be rather the effect of your forgetfulness, than of your absence But, suppose it were, I am too much beholden to you

[1] The final paragraph does not appear in any of the early editions of Saint Evremond's Works, even in those edited by Des Maizeaux It was printed in Raguenet's collection "Nouvelles Œuvres Meslees de M de Saint Evremond, 1700," and restored by Giraud and Planhol It is translated here for the first time

for your past services, to complain of your present indifference I don't inquire after you, to fatigue you for an Answer, or renew a Correspondence that would rob you of some hours which you know how to bestow to better purpose But, Sir you still owe something to our Friendship and you will discharge the obligation if you can find some way, either by your self, or any body else, to let me know that you are in health This piece of news will give me a joy, in which you are more concern'd than any other, and if you were of my temper, you would be of my opinion that to be well is better than to command the whole world No Treasures are worth one year's Health

Pardon, Sir the chat of an infirm man, who enjoying a quarter of an hour's health thinks no other subject so proper to be talk'd on You were perhaps, of my humour, when you enjoy'd some ease of the pains occasion'd by your broken arm, and your other wounds Now you are perfectly cur'd relish the pleasure of it, and let me make melancholy reflections on the Song you have taught me

But oh! when Age benumbs our veins
No longer sprightly Joy remains!

If there be any Airs as agreeable as this in the Musick of the *Feast of Versailles*,[1] I desire you to send them me prick'd and you will oblige one who is more than ever, &c

LETTER 25 [Works 1728 II 48]

[1] The Feast of Versailles or Les Plaisirs de l'Isle enchantee printed with the music engraved by Ballard the royal music-engraver at Paris in 1664 for which presumably Saint Evremond returns thanks in the next letter A kind of illustrated souvenir of the performance was sumptuously produced in the same year by Le Pautre and Isaac Silvestre

26

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1669]

I received, just now, the Letter you have done me the honour to write me, with the Airs you have sent me. I should have a thousand thanks to return you; but knowing, as I do, your inclination to oblige me, you will, I hope, allow me to be somewhat slow in making acknowledgments; for the continual repetition of favours might fatigue so tender a gratitude as mine. Be persuaded, however, that I have a due sense of your kindness, and that you may more absolutely dispose of me, than of any man you know.

I never was more surpriz'd in my life, than to see expos'd to sale here, three little Books that are father'd upon me, and are now printing at Amsterdam. It is about twenty years since I made some short Discourses on the Reflections that are contain'd in one of those little Books [1], but know not who got them from me.

Continue, I beseech you, to love me always: and be persuaded, that you'll never have a surer friend, or one more passionate to serve you.

[1] I have not seen any copies of these "three little Books," pirated by the booksellers of Paris. The "short Discourses on the Reflections [the French text reads *Maximes*] that are contained in one of them" were, according to Des Maizeaux, "Man, who is desirous to know all Things, knows not himself" [Printed as Letter 1 in this edition]; "Reflections on the Maxim that we ought to despise Fortune, and not care for the Court" [Works 1728 I 31], and "That a man ought never to be wanting to his Friends" [Works, 1728 III 324 in the section "A Collection of the best Pieces attributed to Saint Evremond"]. These three pieces were printed in 1668 in a very altered form. Saint Evremond revised the first two at the request of Des Maizeaux, of the third he wrote in the margin of Des Maizeaux's copy "Everything is here alter'd, I don't know myself therein. 'Tis not the same thing I have done"

When there is something curious and diverting I intreat you to send it me particularly Monsieur *Arnauld's Answer* to Monsieur *Claude*[1] as soon as 'tis printed, with Monsieur *Claude's Reply*, which undoubtedly will soon follow *habita ratione* of Postage, that is, any other way than by the Post

Do not forbear obliging me for let my gratitude be never so tender, yet it will last as long as my self, nor shall I ever forget what you do for my Interest

LETTER 26 [Works 1728 II 49]

27

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1669–70]

As irksome and heavy as my Disgraces are yet I find some alleviation when I find a person of so much honour as your self, who has the tenderness to pity them and the generosity to endeavour to put an end to them I am infinitely oblig'd to Madame *** for her kindness, and to you for your zealous endeavours but I should be glad that, for the future, no body would stir up the Comte *de Lauzun*[2] to serve me for I am

[1] Antoine Arnauld the Great Arnauld (1612–1694) the most celebrated of the Jansenist casuists and defender of the Jansenist cause against the Jesuits in the furious doctrinal debate of the seventeenth century to which Pascal contributed with his famous Provincial Letters Jean Claude (1619–1687) was the leader of the Protestant party and Arnauld's most intelligent and indomitable antagonist The book mentioned in this letter was Arnauld's La Perpetuite de la foi de l Eglise catholique touchant l Eucharistie defendue contre le livre de Sieur Claude ministre de Charenton [*v* note to Letter 29]

[2] Antonin at this period Comte but later Duc de Lauzun (1632–1723) It is neither necessary nor indeed possible in

sure he'll do, of his own accord, all that shall lie in his power for me, without doing himself hurt, and I should be very sorry to draw upon him the least mortification. He ought to entertain his Master with nothing but what's agreeable, and hear nothing from him, but what brings him some satisfaction For, when a Master has once begun to refuse, he easily gets a habit of not granting what's ask'd of him I have heard a great Courtier say, that *a man ought very carefully to avoid the first repulse*, and I should be very sorry to have occasion'd one, to a person I honour so highly, as I do the Comte *de Lauzun*.

Not but that I lie under a sort of necessity of going to France, for two Months, unless I resolve to lose the little I have there, and all that makes me subsist in foreign Countries. There is, as I take it, about forty thousand Livres still due to me, of which I can get nothing. however, I fear more than want the Relief of Nature, which might put an end to the ill treatments I receive from Fortune I am tormented with devilish Vapours, but as soon as they are over, I am as merry as ever. In one hour, all that is sad, and all that is pleasant, presents it self, by turns, to my imagination · so that I am more sensibly affected with the effects of Humour, than by the power of Reason. I should easily fall to moralizing; which is the inclination of all the unfortunate, whose imagination is generally taken up either with melancholy, or, at least, serious thoughts As I fear the ridicule that

a note to discuss the life and character of this brilliant courtier The most daring incident in his adventurous career was a runaway marriage with the daughter of Gaston d'Orleans, Louise Duchesse de Montpensier, " la grande Mademoiselle ", a cousin of Louis XIV, for which he was sent to the sinister fortress of Pignerol in Piedmont, where Saint Evremond's old friend Fouquet was imprisoned This affair with Mlle de Montpensier was told by Bussy Rabutin in " Le Pérroquet ou les Amours de Mademoiselle ", which he afterwards incorporated in the " Histoire amoureuse des Gauls "

attends Gravity, I stop short to tell you only, Sir, that no man is more absolutely yours, &c

I beseech you, when occasion offers, to assure Madame *** of my most humble acknowledgments, for all her kindnesses

Since I had the honour to write to you last, I have pass'd my tedious hours in trifles I have made some *Observations on our Historians, on Tragedy, and on the Spanish, French, Italian, and English Comedy, on Operas,* &c [1] But these were only particular Observations without much Design or Regularity, tho grounded on the different Genius of those respective Nations I have lost part of them, and the rest is still in con-

[1] All these pieces are printed in Saint Evremond s collected works A Discourse upon the French Historians (Works 1728 II 126) which says Des Maizeaux cannot be read with too much attention by those who apply themselves to the writing of History Upon Tragedies [*ibid* p 154] Upon our Comedies except those of Molière in which the true spirit of Comedy is found and upon the Spanish Comedy [*ibid* p 159] Of the Italian Comedy [*ibid* p 163] Of the English Comedy [*ibid* p 168] Upon Operas [*ibid* p 172] Des Maizeaux in his Life dates these compositions after 1672 but omits as usual to date the letter in which they are mentioned Planhol copying Giraud dates the letter 1673 It is obvious that the letter must have been written before 1671 the year when Saint Evremond was informed by de Lionne that Lauzun had been imprisoned it is curious that both Giraud and Planhol were content to allow Saint Evremond to express his thanks for the active help of a man who had already been in prison a year or two and who was not to be released for another ten In favour of a later date (1672–3) there is the legend that the Duke of Buckingham translated and interpreted English plays for Saint Evremond to enable him to write his Essay It is possible of course that their conversations had taken place at the Hague or as far back as 1665 when Saint Evremond was still in England If he wrote his Essay on the English Comedy in England it must have been in the Spring of 1670 (the year of his final return) Personally I am disposed to date the letter in the latter half of the year 1669

fusion: however, such as it is, I shall transmit it to you. You will infinitely oblige me to send me all that's new, provided it be curious, and scarce.

LETTER 27 [Works, 1728 II 124]

28

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART [1]

From the Hague. January 10th [1668/9]

I am infinitely obliged to you for the promptness with which you have carried out all my commissions; I have taken as much trouble with yours, and on the very day that I received your letter, I did not fail to pay your respects to Monsieur *Muller* and to the Comte *de Donat*.[2] The former used to ask me every

[1] Anne d'Hervart, the youngest son of Barthèlemy d'Hervart, the Controller-general of Finance, a wealthy Protestant banker, was born about the year 1630 He inherited, not only his father's wealth but his father's patronage of the arts, and he is remembered as the protector and friend of the poet La Fontaine who died in his Parisian house in the rue de la Plâtriere M Chaponière adds that as a Counsellor in Parliament, he abjured the Protestant faith in order to keep his post and the great fortune that had been amassed by his father D'Hervart married Françoise le Ragois de Brétonvilliers, a woman of great charm and generosity, who is described by Mathieu Marais as "one of the most beautiful women ever seen" [*v* an article on the d'Hervart family in the "Revue historique", 1879 X 285 & XI 355]

[2] The identity of *Muller* and *Donat* is doubtful, although it is quite certain that M Chaponière's conjecture that they were Waller, the English poet, and the Earl of Dorset (the same who had a hand in translating Corneille's "Pompey"), is fantastic as even a superficial reading of the letters will show M Cohen is probably correct in assuming that the former was Laurent Muller, the Duke of Brunswick-Lunebourg's representative at the Hague, and the latter a former Governor of Orange Le Comte de Donat (or D'honat) is mentioned several times in the diplomatic correspondence between Arlington and Temple [ed 1701 *passim*]

day ' Have you any news Sir, of Monsieur *d Hervart*?' No, I replied, ' and I do not expect any You do not know the French, while they are here, having nothing better to do, they cultivate our acquaintance, but when they are back in Paris again they naturally occupy themselves with their business and pleasure, and scarcely remember those they left at the Hague ' "I doubt as much of Monsieur *d Hervart*" replied Monsieur *Muller*, "upon my word, he is the finest gentleman I have ever met, so wise, so modest, with so much wit withal, in all my days I have come across no Frenchman like him" Judge from that our friend's enthusiasm for you! The Comte *de Donat* has no less, but if you will permit me to speak like a spagirical doctor,[1] I would place the source of his in the loins rather than in the heart For I have always noticed that his affection is mixed with some regret that you have escaped *intactus Socratia fide diligere* is not his affair, and this man whom you conceive to be modest, *tam frugi est ut ego etiam illi puer videri possem quod omen Deus avertat, meliorem*

[1] A spagirical doctor was one who dabbled in the mysteries of ancient chemistry the epithet is said to have been coined by the arch quack Paracelsus M Chaponière sees in this an allusion to Saint Evremond s witty account of the frauds practised in London about the year 1666 by a consummate charlatan an Irishman named Valentine Greatrakes [*v* Works 1728 I 189 The Irish Prophet A Novel] He was nicknamed The Stroaker on the grounds of his assertion that he would cure any disease by the laying on of hands Like most charlatans he persuaded many women to be stroaked and made the best of his opportunities as Des Maizeaux is quick to point out It was even observed he says that this Miracle monger stroak d the Women more feelingly than the Men and people did afterwards make themselves merry with some intrigues he had with that Sex I confess that The Irish Prophet has not helped me to explain the curious allusions in the next sentence which I leave to the reader to interpret as modestly or as immodestly as he wishes

mihi mentem dederе vel diu vel anni. As for me, I much regret your company, and in the company of cultivated men, find occasion to refer to your attainments; the conversation of the learned leaves me longing for your good taste. I am delighted that Monsieur *d'Elbène*,[1] who is more sparing in his praise of French poetry than he has been with his property, remembers his friend so warmly. His conduct with me over my 2,300 livres is a slight flaw in his virtue, but when a needy fellow takes up with a woman, he can do without many things. However, I shall be delighted if he fulfils that excellent and worthy ambition of sending me 200 pistols. According to your advice, I have resolved not to increase my expenditure in view of that capital.

No one is more your servant than I am.

LETTER 28 This and the nine other letters to Monsieur d'Hervart are translated here for the first time There is no mention of them, and indeed, no mention of M d'Hervart whatsoever in any of the editions, French or English, of Saint Evremond's works They were printed for the first time in "Le Conservateur ou Collection de Morceaux rares et

[1] Monsieur d'Elbène, whom Saint Evremond nicknamed "Cunctator," doubtless for his delay in paying his debts, was one of the first lovers of Ninon de Lanclos, whom he is said to have instructed in the neo-epicurean ways of the Regency "libertins" From the reference in this letter it appears that he had just been married a further difficulty in the way of his paying off his debt to Saint Evremond. Guy d'Elbène, Chamberlain to Gaston d'Orléans, seems to have been a pleasant and wholly irresponsible person. He was everlastingly in debt, and not only to his old friend Saint Evremond, for Segrais, who, as gentleman-in-waiting to Gaston's daughter "la grande Mademoiselle", lived in the same house as d'Elbène, recounts that at his marriage he was involved in some eighty lawsuits, and that on one occasion at least he was ingeniously tricked by his creditors into a coach which carried him off to the Bastille where he was forced to remain for three days [Segrais. Œuvres diverses 1723 I].

d Ouvrages anciens elagués traduits et refaits en tout ou en partie This ancient magazine edited by Turben and Brueis contains in its April number for the year 1758 twelve of Saint Evremond s letters to d Hervart two of his to Ninon de Lanclos and a reply of the latter s Emile Colombey in his edition of Ninon s Letters quoted extracts from Le Conservateur but it was not until 1922 that the complete texts were reprinted with annotations by M Chaponière in the Revue d Histoire litteraire de la France [October] In 1926 M Gustave Cohen an excellent scholar revised several of Chaponniere s notes in an article entitled Le Sejour de Saint Evremond en Hollande which he contributed to the Revue de Littérature comparee [January] The whole series of letters is printed in Planhol s edition Unfortunately there is no record of the original manuscripts nor any indication of the source from which the editors of Le Conservateur drew their material there can however be no doubt about its authenticity For the present translation I have used M Chaponniere s recension which has been collated with the original version given in Le Conservateur

When Saint Evremond left France he entrusted his financial affairs to M d Hervart The latter appears to have visited Saint Evremond at the Hague between 1665 and 1668 the following letters were addressed to him after his return to Paris

29

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART

From the Hague March 24th [1669]

I have received the large volume [1] you did me the honour of sending, and return my humble thanks to you for it *Bussy* brought it to me one mail day

[1] This was Arnauld s famous reply to Claude La Perpetuite de la Foi de l Eglise catholique sur l Eucharistie which he had written with Nicole s help and published in a thick quarto in 1669 though it had been completed in June of the previous year Before its publication Saint Evremond had asked the Comte de Lionne to send him an early copy [*v* Letter 26]

[2] Bussy M Cohen has ingeniously discovered was the innkeeper of the Hotellerie du Dauphin de France where Saint Evremond was then lodging

and to amuse himself, terrified me with the postage he demanded. In the end I discovered that it had come by way of Antwerp, and cost me nothing a good thing for a man who lives at the Hague. It seems to me, after having perused the book, that it is full of doctrine, but does not solve the important problem of which it treats. It has now resolved it self into a lengthy discussion between *Daillé*, Monsieur *Claude* and Monsieur *Arnauld*, in which the subject of the Sacrament is no longer of great importance.[1] Some months ago one of the most learned men of this country had a celebrated argument with the all-famous *Rabbi* on the subject of the Messiah. All the Burghers awaited the results of this illustrious conversation, but our Doctors had scarcely broached the subject in dispute, when they happened upon a detail of chronology, wherein there had been a miscalculation on one side or the other of two hundred years. Each of them produced so many authorities, quoted so many passages, put forward so much Hebrew, Greek and Latin to back up his opinion, that when supper-time

[1] This lengthy discussion between Antoine Arnauld, the jansenist, and Jean Claude and Jean Daillé, the Protestant spokesmen is one of the outstanding events in the history of religious controversy After more than two centuries it is almost impossible to make such dry bones live, yet for a proper understanding of the events which spurred Pascal to write his "Provincial Letters," and led up to the disastrous Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, this vigorous and learned debate cannot be overlooked Arnauld and Nicole's book, says Bayle in his Dictionary [Art Arnauld], "provoked one of the most celebrated Disputes there has ever been between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants M Claude, the spokesman of the latter, came out of it with the finest reputation that any Minister has ever enjoyed, and M Arnauld, the chief spokesman of the former, never, perhaps, employed to better purpose than he did at that time, all the weapons of his intellect At one time or another in the course of that famous contest, genius, eloquence, logic and study appeared in their most brilliant and forceful aspects

came round the Jew returned to his lodgings to await the Messiah, the Christian to his house with Our Lord [1] Perhaps when he has written well on the subject of the Sacrament without explaining anything Monsieur *Arnauld* will end by having the advantage in the matter of the Greek Church, and of the changes during the 9th and 10th centuries, which Monsieur *Claude* advanced with too much assurance, whereas Monsieur *Claude* will rebut those triumphs with the silence of the Pagans, the silence of the Fathers in the first centuries, and with the correct method of interpreting the literal and metaphorical meaning of the Scriptures I shall present Monsieur *Arnauld's* book to Monsieur *Vossius* [1] in a few days, he is an admirer

Each side was convinced of its own victory and the incredible trouble taken by Port Royal [i e the Jansenists] to procure at great expense a mass of evidence from the Levant made scarcely any impression on the convictions of the Protestants as regards the faith of the Christians in those parts touching the Eucharist The Jesuit faction was easily defeated in the early stages of the conflict Arnauld and Claude were left to fight between themselves Saint Evremond refers with a touch of irony to the elaborate evidence produced from the remotest historical and geographical sources Bayle in his article on Claude remarks that the latter was forced to go far and wide to discover the opinions held by the Greek Church and the Schismatics of the Orient to read innumerable books of travel and to build up as many hypotheses As a matter of fact it was not Arnauld who triumphed over the question of the Greek Church but a priest of Sainte Genevieve Father Paris who came to his assistance and refuted Claude s theories

[1] Isaac Vossius the son of the illustrious scholar Gerard Joseph Vossius was born at Leyden in 1618 and held the post of Historiographer to the Dutch republic until 1670 when he travelled with Saint Evremond to England On his arrival he was appointed by Charles II a canon and librarian at Windsor M Chaponiere remarks that while recognizing in him one of the most learned men in Europe Saint Evremond made fun of his faith in everything that was extraordinary fabulous or beyond all belief Charles II said of him He is a strange man for a Divine there is

of Monsieur *Claude*, although he thinks that he should have confined himself to the first four centuries If you ever visit the Mareschal *de Créqui*,[1] I must ask you to assure him of my very humble service A fortnight ago, I did myself the honour of writing to him, but I do not do so very often for fear of importuning him. Six months ago, I begged him to have a word with Madame *de Corvanzèle* - about a small debt, which hardly deserves the attention of so distinguished a petitioner All the same I should like to hear what the Norman lady said

LETTER 29 [*v.* note, Letter 28]

30

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART

Judge of my esteem for you ! All the while that *Bussy* left me under the impression that I had to pay the postage on Monsieur *Arnauld's* book, I did not have the smallest sensation of vexation or ill-humour. Those Curses,[3] which you tell me I employ so happily have not ventured to ruffle the most affectionate feelings in the world. I am very much obliged, I told [1669]

nothing he refuses to believe, but the Bible", and Des Maizeaux records that when Dr Haskard, visiting him on his death-bed [Feb 1688–9], exhorted him to receive the Sacrament, Vossius replied "I rather wish you would tell me how I shall oblige my Farmers to pay me their Rents"

[1] *v.* note, Letter 9

[2] Of Madame de Corvanzèle nothing is known except the obvious fact that she came from Normandy and belonged to the honourable company of Saint Evremond's debtors

[3] Saint Evremond's favourite oaths, according to his own confession in a set of verses to the Duchesse Mazarin [Œuvres, 1739 V 157], were. "I' Faith !", "Hang it !"; "The Devil take me !"

myself, to Monsieur *d Hervart s* punctiliousness but it has treated me more punctiliously than I desired I shall not for the life of me solicit it again For he s both active and diligent, qualities which are not in the least in keeping with the staidness of conscientious persons A punctilious man, who plays tennis every day, is too active for me hereafter I shall choose those who wear stays, and calculate the number of their steps in order to reach their destination, *festinatione lente* exactly on time As soon as *Bussy* thought fit to stop joking, (too elaborately for an innkeeper), I changed my mind and came to the conclusion that the advantage of having active friends compares favour ably with the poor service a man receives from those snug and indolent persons I should have commended a moment before [1] It seems to me that our Scholars in Paris hold exactly the same views about Monsieur's *Arnauld's* book as those in Holland plenty of wit, that is to say, and plenty of learning but is anyone any the wiser on the subject of the Sacrament? I Faith no! and we have to fall back on the Institution of the Last Supper and the custom of the Early Church, to which Monsieur *Arnauld* will come I think in the long run If he defeats you all on the first centuries come over to us, if we are defeated, my honour will always keep me where I am but you, I confess, will be well advised to stay where you are I belong no more to the century of my grandfather or of my forefathers than I do to that of the Apostles, one and other have passed from us In our own age however, we should be on the side of Truth I have no doubts

[1] These observations on the duties of Friends are developed freely in Saint Evremond s epistle to the Earl of Saint Albans [Letter 58] entitled Friendship without Friendship

[2] The struggle between the Catholicks and Protestants in France was to end in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the expulsion of the Huguenots Saint Evremond advises D Hervart a Protestant to join him in England in the event of Arnauld s success in the controversy

about the triumph of Monsieur *Arnauld*, and that accounts for my saying what I do. His second volume, upon which he is working, will clearly prove, I am convinced, what he promises.

I cannot send you what you want because it is incomplete [1] I am enlarging it more than I intended, which will make it as fat as my work on the Romans.[2] When it bores me, I work on it for a quarter of an hour, and then play at Chess for the rest of the day. I beg you to let me have the letter which Monsieur *d'Elbène* wrote, to tell me that his wife is not really dead [3] The Comte *de Rieux* [4] has returned, and is none too well pleased with Mademoiselle *de Lanclos's* letter Monsieur *Donat* has written to let you know that his brother has died in Candy, so that he is now the eldest. Monsieur *Muller* sends you a thousand compliments We have with us here the Baron *de Mercy*, who is worth a hundred Comtes *de Mérode* [5]; the comparison alone would insult him, for 'pon my word he's an odd kind of fellow Tell me if you are going to plead in any spectacular cases in the Courts.

[1] This, I presume to be the long letter [printed in full in this edition Letter 41, p 111] addressed to the Mareschal de Créqui, "Who ask'd the temper of my Mind, and my thoughts of all things, in my old Age"

[2] Saint Evremond's most substantial work "Reflections on the different Genius of the Roman People, at different times of the Republick" [Works, 1728 I 55]

[3] She did not die, in fact, until September 3, 1680

[4] René-Louis, Comte de Rieux (d 1713)

[5] The Baron de Mercy may have been an "odd kind of fellow," two and a half centuries ago, to-day he is simply obscure and M Chaponière's conjecture that he was the son of the General who repulsed Turenne at Marienthal and was mortally wounded at Nordlingen, does not tell us very much, it is conceivable that Saint Evremond knew the Baron's father, since he himself was wounded at Nordlingen As for the Comte de Mérode, if he was worth but the hundredth part of De Mercy in 1669, he is worth nothing, as far as details of his biography are concerned, to-day

If I had paid the carriage on that fat tome through the post, you would have made it a subject of dispute, in other words you would have defended me from all the injustices of the world Farewell, Sir, I am most truly yours and with all my heart If you see Mademoiselle *de Larclos*,[1] assure her that she has no better friend on earth and that when I want to flatter my vanity a little, I imagine that I know her merits better than anybody else I consider they trespass on my rights who think they know all her good qualities

I have just finished reading *Tartuffe*[2], it is *Molière's* masterpiece I cannot understand why they forbade its production for so long If I am saved, I shall owe my salvation to it Devotion sounds so sensible in the mouth of *Cleante*, that it has made me relinquish all my philosophy, and the Hypocrits are so well depicted that the shame of seeing their portraits will force them to abandon Hypocrisy O Saintly Virtue! What benefits you will confer on Mankind

Monsieur *de Chambonnière's*[3] Corantos, which you

[1] Saint Evremond's relations with Ninon de Lanclos are discussed in the Introduction and revealed in the letters which passed between them

[2] The first three acts of Molière's brilliant satire on Hypocrisy were produced before the King at Versailles on May 12 1664 A kind of panic ensued in which the truly devout and the truly hypocritical combined with the authority of the Queen Mother Anne of Austria to forbid any subsequent performances Unperturbed however Molière finished the play which was performed for three years with great success in private houses In 1667 a single performance was given in a public theatre but the play was instantly suppressed by Lamoignon the premier président It was not until February 5 1669 that the ban was removed

Religion and genuine piety says M de Julleville have survived Tartuffe and so indeed has Hypocrisy as a weapon of attack its edge is now worn down but as a picture of an ineradicable vice it is immortal

[3] Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (d 1670) was First Player of the Harpsichord to Louis XIV Two volumes of his harpsichord music were published at Paris in 1670 Le

sent me, are pretty, but they are not his best, the Sarabande is very agreable, and in his true manner. I once heard him play a Suite of Corantos in a Concert at the Duc *de Joyeuse's*, with which I was enraptured. I have asked you to send me his *Springtime*, for which Monsieur *Servien* [1] wrote the words; it begins with a Coranto, continues with a Sarabande, and ends with a Chaconne. I shall be obliged if you can send them all, as well as *Young Zephyrs* and the Suite of Corantos. All this is a burden, but as they are old pieces, they will not be difficult to obtain, and you could certainly have them copied by some scholar who is familiar with Monsieur *de Chambonnière's* style.

LETTER 30 [*v* note, Letter 28.]

31

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART

July 30th [1669]

I cannot understand how I can have made you think that I was going to apply myself to experimenting, for of all things in the world, it is least to my taste [2] I

Gallois, in a letter to Mlle Regnault, 1680 [quoted in Grove's Dictionary] says that "he excelled every performer of his day in the soundness and softness of his touch"

[1] This was Abel Servien (1593–1659), the diplomatist and formerly Superintendant, with Fouquet, of the Finances In his leisure he wrote verses, and was elected to the French Academy in 1634, the year of its foundation by Richelieu

[2] M Chaponière has an interesting explanation of the first sentence of this letter When peace was concluded in 1669 between France and Holland, Saint Evremond renewed his appeal to Louis XIV and his ministers for a mitigation of his sentence It was again refused, possibly because Saint Evremond's motives in making a prolonged stay in an enemy state were suspected M Chaponiere ingeniously suggests that d'Hervart, when he heard of his friend's contemplated journey to England, pretended that Saint

leave it to Monsieur *Thevenot*[1] whose passion for insects has kept him for a month now at Amsterdam, after he had studied at Leyden more Oriental languages than are necessary for conferring with all the Princes of the East. Should I visit England it would rather be for the pleasure of conversing with my friends than of seeing the Fellows of the Royal Society,[2] and I should prefer the Duke of *Buckingham's* violin to his Laboratory however curious it might be.[3] Of all Philosophies, I love that only which helps me to live with more sense and less regret.

Let us leave off a solemn discussion to speak of Mademoiselle *de Lanclos*. I should ask you to offer her my compliments on the pleasant task of choosing

Evremond was going there not for any political motive but simply to amuse himself with the popular pastime of making chemical experiments. It is obvious that Saint Evremond did not appreciate d'Hervart's elaborate precaution.

[1] Melchissedec Thevenot (1620–1692) a French explorer and a typical example of the scientific enthusiast of the seventeenth century. He was Keeper of the King's Library.

[2] The Royal Society was founded by Charles II in 1663. Its early history was written by one of its original members, Thomas Spratt, and published in 1667.

[3] George Villiers 2nd Duke of Buckingham (1628–1687) perhaps the most brilliant if not the most unscrupulous courtier of Charles II's reign. His accomplishments are too well known and do not need to be repeated here. He was an intimate friend of Saint Evremond's and it is said that he acted as his interpreter of English plays. His character is sharply drawn in Dryden's familiar lines:

> A man so various that he seem'd to be
> Not one but all Mankind's Epitome
> Stiff in Opinions always in the wrong
> Was Everything by starts and Nothing long
> But in the course of one revolving Moon
> Was Chymist Fidler States man and Buffoon
> Then for all Women Painting Rhiming Drinking
> Besides ten thousand Freaks that died in thinking
>
> [Absalom and Achitophel I 545–552]

a Lover among a score of candidates, if I was not afraid of her mistaking a testimony of genuine delight for one of malicious astonishment. She would be very much to blame if she did, I can assure you. There is not a Man of Honour in France, (if he has my discrimination), who would not think himself happy to be within reach of her. It will be a Miracle of the Age if she pays me my hundred Pistols, and a Marvel if she does not, seeing how old she is. Yet that does not prevent her from enjoying the great satisfaction of being unfaithful, and of changing her lover whensoever she pleases. A girl of twenty is admired for her constancy; at thirty inconstancy is the chiefest virtue; and the happiest woman is she who deceives her lovers at an age when others are glad to meet deceivers.

If my health were better, I should be well enough here. I keep the finest table imaginable with the *Rhinegrave*. Every day I win several games of Chess by guarding my Pawns. I listen to Mademoiselle *Sweert*, who sings Italian songs better than any I have heard in my life All our Ambassadors are excellent Gentlemen. There's gambling and there's gossip. Without my Vapours, and with some good Champagne, I could repeat what *Marot's* good Monk said while he roasted the partridge: "*How hard it is to serve Holy Church!*" [1] Provided that there is no War, it is possible to live here, if there is, I shall be embarrassed to know where to go. In spite of all that I have said, your condition, Gentlemen, is much better than ours. In Paris there is every day some new entertainment, while here there is nothing but a kind of monotonous content, and when our tastes grow tired, there is no variety to stimulate them. Farewell, Sir, believe me, I pray, as much yours as any man's on

[1] *v* Clément Marot's (1495–1544) epigram "Un gros prieur son petit fils baisoit," printed 1540 [*v* P Villey, Chronologie des Œuvres de Marot Paris 1923]

earth and keep a little of your friendship for me I beg you to see Mademoiselle *de Lanclos* and Monsieur *d Elbène* and find out if I am to get any thing If I ended my letter without sending you a thousand wishes from Monsieur *Muller*, he would never forgive me

LETTER 31 [*v* note Letter 28]

32

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART

November 25th [1669] [1]

Bussy is charmed with the memory of your manners and even more so with that of your person Never has he had a guest like you, and whenever there's occasion to commend a traveller who is staying here 'He s a well bred man", says Monsieur *Bussy* "but he is not Monsieur *d'Hervart*' His regard for your person could rival Monsieur *Muller s*, and I should have added Monsieur *Donat s* if the faithless creature had not neglected you for someone else He swears to me however, that you are as dear to him as an exile can be [2] In the practises you were wont to indulge in together objects are more important than ideas As for me, I know the charm of your mind, and shall always preserve for you the most delicate sentiments of friendship and esteem Not that you did not

[1] I am inclined to date this letter in the early months of 1670 Chaponiere and Planhol follow the pencilled attribution 1669 in the copy at the Bibliotheque nationale But I cannot trace an earlier edition of Montfleury s play (*v* note *infra*) than 1670 which must have been the source of Saint Evremond s remarks unless of course he had seen a manuscript version

[2] *as an exile can be* the Conservateur reads *que peut etre un abirac* A marginal note in the copy at the Bibliotheque nationale alters this to que peut etre un absent a correction I have adopted in translation

deserve Monsieur *Donat's*, it is only that they are beyond me, and my only desire now is to give lessons of purety to the young "It's an ill life that's never mended", 'tis said somewhere or other. Having enjoyed the pleasures of the senses long enough, I am reserving my old age for those of the mind. And yet I live pretty content, tho' I am always speaking as if I were an unhappy wretch. My fortune having prevented me from becoming ambitious, and my health from becoming a voluptuary, 'tis my design to grow wise on the strength of my reason You do not mention the letter I sent you for Mademoiselle *de Lanclos*, nor the commission you were kind enough to undertake, to speak to her and to Monsieur *d'Elbène* about my hundred pistols · I beg you to send me a reply, favourable or otherwise. We have with us some actors, who are tolerable in Comedy, but detestable in Tragedy, with the exception of one woman, an excellent actress in every respect. They played *Tartuffe*, in which the characters pleased me exceedingly, and since I shall always preserve some kind of idea of French things, that of a Hypocrite, so well-drawn, had all the effect on me it was designed to have Here, where men are content to be observant in Religious matters, where an act of Hypocrisy would deceive no one, they ask what an Hypocrite is, and they hardly believe there is a country where such a person can serve some purpose. There are scarcely more cuckolds here than *Tartuffes*, so that *Bernadille* in *Woman, the Judge and the Plaintiff*,[1] would not have appeared any the more worthy, but for the lucky

[1] This play "La Femme, Juge et Partie", a comedy of 5 acts in verse, by Antoine Jacob Montfleury (1640–1685), the son of the famous tragedian, was produced with great applause on March 2, 1669 Bernadille, the cuckold, appears in it as the husband Montfleury was a jealous rival of Moliere and this play, at one moment, was considered as great as "Tartuffe".

arrival of several Cuckolds of German and Flemish birth, about whom it was possible to make some extremely appropriate observations All others are but rustic cuckolds compared to *Bernadille*, and if the truth must be told, we find in him the acme of Cuckoldry I should continue gossiping until to morrow with neither order nor sequence, if the little sense I have left did not permit me to realize that you are not interested in my fancies I am told that *Corneille* is writing an admirable play [1] Present, I pray you, on my behalf, a thousand compliments to Monsieur *de Lionne*, the nephew of the Minister and tell him that I cherish a very friendly grudge for all the obligations I owe him, if he can procure for me some of the best passages of the play before it is acted, I shall be *still further in his debt* *Farewell, Sir, no one is* more your very humble and very obedient servant than I am

LETTER 32 [*v* note Letter 28]

33 [2]

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART

[1669/70]

It was always my intention to go over to England, but as the company with whom I meant to make the

[1] Tite et Berenice produced 1670 of which the inaccurate Chevalier de Mouhy in his Tablettes dramatiques 1752 accurately for once remarks It proves that the most celebrated authors decline in the evening of their lives It was the Duchesse d Orleans Madame who conceived the unfortunate idea of setting Corneille and his rival Racine the task of writing a tragedy on the same subject though she did not survive to witness Racine s easy victory and Corneille s mortification

This letter belongs to the first half of the year 1670 and not as Chaponiere and Planhol state to the previous year At the end of April or the beginning of May Sir William

journey has not left the Hague, I have not set out after all, and as the season is far advanced I know not what we shall do. I have finished those trifles of which I spoke, but they cannot be sent, tho' I should gladly have consulted your taste, which I consider the best in the world. Everything I do is but a distraction to make Time pass less tediously, not that there is any lack of amusement, if I could enjoy such a thing, but what is pleasure to a man with little inclination and little vice? When a man has to reckon with his infirmities, even in matters of board and lodging, he is no longer of any account in the world. I only live now by reflecting upon life, which is hardly living, and without Monsieur *Descartes'* philosophy which says: *I think, therefore I am*,[1] I could scarcely believe myself to be. That is all the benefit I have received from studying the views of that famous man, whom they value so highly in France, but who was surely somewhat odd. I have enquired with the deepest curiosity of his moods and attitudes towards every thing. I was told by many learned men who knew him in Sweden and Holland that he suffered from some

Temple, the English Ambassador at the Hague, was directed by Charles II, through Lord Arlington, minister for Foreign Affairs, to invite Saint Evremond to return to England At the conclusion of his letter to Temple, dated from Whitehall, April 29, 1670, Arlington adds "The inclosed letters are to Monsieur St Evremond, to invite him into England, where his Friends will be glad to see him I pray help us to encourage his Journey all you can"

[Arlington's Letters, 1701]

[1] "Cogito ergo sum" the key to the philosophy which Descartes adumbrated in his "Discours de la Méthode" (1637)

Descartes spent about twenty years of his life in Holland In 1649, in order to escape from the clutches of religious controversialists at Leyden, he accepted the invitation of Christine, Queen of Sweden, to become her private philosopher He only enjoyed his anomalous post for a year, and died at Stockholm in 1650

glandular trouble The truth is that he died from a seizure because the Queen of Sweden would not quit reading the *Morals* of *Aristotle* in order to conform to the ways of his *Gland* [1] The misfortune is that he died of it because he had promised many people that he was going to discover the secret of never dying, which he would have demonstrated as well as he did the *substantia cogitans* of the Soul

If you see Mademoiselle *de Lanclos* I pray you assure her that it is impossible to be more her servant than I am although I have heard as much mention of my hundred pistols as I should if pistols had never existed Her good faith is immense, but my absence is long, and after eight years there is nothing so easy as to forget people when the memory costs a hundred pistols Perhaps I am wrong to suspect her of mortal

[1] I am unable to find any justification for Saint Evremond's malicious suggestion as to the manner of Descartes' death or indeed of any gossip concerning his relations with his formidable blue stocking hostess Actually Descartes is said to have died from a chill Evelyn in a letter to William Wotton [1696] speaking of Baillet's Vita Descartes says that Descartes was the most facetious and agreeable conversation in the world among the ladies whenever he happened to be so engaged which is not a sufficient reason for saying that he suffered from prostatic enlargement Whether there is a source for Saint Evremond's jest or not it is certain that he would have been delighted to discover any way of casting aspersions delicate or indelicate on a man who had attacked his beloved master Gassendi and the scepticism of the libertins It is in the next sentence in the same style of light irony that Saint Evremond rallies Descartes' cherished illusion that he would discover a way of prolonging life [*v* Descartes' Letter to Huyghens from Egmond 1638 quoted by Des Maizeaux in Works 1728 I xlii–xliii]

Saint Evremond had satisfied his curiosity about Descartes from the accounts which that agreable antiquary Sir Kenelm Digby had given him of his conversations with Descartes at Egmond [*v* also Saint Evremond's criticism of Descartes in a Letter to the Mareschal de Crequi No 41 of this edition]

keeping with the part I have always played in your eyes which is neither that of simple friend, nor yet of genuine lover That Sir, is all I wrote with the object of amusing her I was well aware that a man should not jest at a distance particularly when fashions have changed As for my feelings for her they will never change, and nothing will stop me from being eternally among her friends, even if she does not wish it

LETTER 34 [*v* note Letter 28]

35

TO MONSIEUR D HERVART

From the Hague April 10th [1670] [1]

Indeed you are right to treat me as hard hearted It is the lot of exiles to be so, though it is not for them to choose and had you fallen into disgrace your self, you would know that no one is more tender-hearted than a man in trouble I have written somewhere [2] that ill fortune is not content with bringing us misfortunes but makes our feelings more sensitive so that we may suffer more You, Sirs who live like

[1] It is difficult to reconcile the date of this letter with the date of Arlington s invitation to Saint Evremond The Conservateur prints *April* 10 and a pencilled note in the copy at the Bibliotheque nationale adds 1670 Either we must suppose the date to be incorrect or that Saint Evremond had had unofficial news of the invitation and was actually making preparations to leave Holland before Arlington s letter arrived

[2] In a letter to the Mareschal de Gramont [No 11 p 37] he had written Ill fortune is not content with bringing us into calamity but makes us more tender to bear and more touchy to resent every thing and nature which ought to resist her is in confederacy with her and gives us a more exquisite sense of all the evils she does us

Kings in Paris, who want nothing, either for the satisfaction of your wits or the gratification of your senses, young and vigorous, (I lay more store by those qualities than by all the rest), in a word, you Men of Pleasure, rarely concern yourselves for those who suffer.

I am thinking of setting out for England towards the end of the month, and I shall travel with the Prince of Orange, if his courteous invitation is realized, or with the Portuguese Ambassador.[1] Whatever company I happen upon, there is always the sea to be crossed, and I need not labour to convince you of the unpleasantness of the crossing. To shew you that I am not hard-hearted, I'll tell you that I pity even the sailors when they embark, rather, if the truth be told, because they remind me of my own sufferings when I have been at sea, than because of any interest I take in theirs. As soon as I have reached England, I will write to you, if I can, from London. Love me constantly, and believe me as much yours as it is possible to be: the address is laconic and worthy of a Philosopher to whom eloquence is displeasing.

LETTER 35 [*v* note, Letter 28]

36

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1670]

If I consulted nothing but discretion, I might save you the trouble of receiving some of my Letters, and the fatigue of an Answer, which your civility will incline you to write; but as 'tis my temper to consult my own satisfaction as much as yours, you will not

[1] Saint Evremond travelled to England with his card-playing friend, the Portuguese Ambassador, Don Francisco de Melos

take it ill if I enjoy that which I find in entertaining you, and all that I can do for you, Sir, is not to abuse it, by too frequent an enjoyment If you knew what a great trouble it is to me to forbear it, you would easily forgive what I do, for the violence I undergo in not doing more

I am return'd to a Court,[1] after having liv'd four years in a Republick, without either Pleasure or Entertainment, for I think the Hague is the true seat of Indolence I know not how I put new life into my sentiments but, however, the fancy took me to feel something more quick and lively, and a fond imagination that I might return to France made me pitch upon London, as a medium between the French Courtiers and the Dutch Burgomasters Hitherto, I was contented to take up with the Heaviness, or to speak more obligingly, the Gravity of the Gentlemen of Holland but as I do not find my self much nearer France than I was so the vivacity I have studied is very injurious to my repose, since it draws me back from Indolence without advancing me to Pleasure That I mean, which I fancied to my self in seeing you at Paris for, to speak the truth I find here a great deal, amongst abundance of polite and *well bred men*

Your Friend the Duke of *Buckingham* has told me, that I was very much beholden to Monsieur *de Lionne* the Minister to whom I intreat you to return a thousand thanks from me I am one of his Admirers, but my admiration is not worth the pains he has taken and indeed, 'twas only his generosity that prompted him to act so nobly Pray be your self so generous as now and then to remember your most humble and most obedient Servant

LETTER 36 [Works 1728 II 51]

[1] i e Whitehall

37

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1670]

I am as vexed as a man can be at not receiving the letter you were kind enough to send me; it appears that it was lost with many others in the disorganization of the post. Monsieur *D'Hervart* has informed me that you will arrange for me to draw fifty pistols when I like, and in my constant desire to obey your wishes, I have resolved to do so at once. What will become of the other fifty, if I do not draw them, I know not. In accordance with your promise, I willingly discharge our dear friend and mock-creditor Monsieur *D'Elbène* of the balance which amounts to 1335 *livres*, and you will thereby put his mind at rest. In the event of my being able to draw only the fifty pistols, which Monsieur *D'Hervart* mentions, do not reproach yourself with breaking your word, since it is my destiny that ordains it, not lack of good faith on your part. Among the most upright of men, my friends, who would have been well-disposed to help me, had I needed it, have treated me in the same way, I bear them no grudge, for 'tis my cursed destiny that has forced them to bely their inclination and act contrary to their nature and custom Nevertheless I have another consolation to draw my thoughts away from this unhappy Influence to something pleasant. For if I were to draw the whole sum, your probity and wonted honesty would deprive me entirely of the part of a lover constrained by the bonds of your infidelity. If I were to draw nothing the part of friend would find itself too interested, and the sense of security that has always existed in your dealings with me would be lost The sentiments you affect are worthy of the delicacy of your affection, and do honour to the rôle I have always played in your eyes, neither that of simple friend, nor

yet of genuine lover Perhaps you will be so hard-hearted as to deny the least suggestion of passion but I am used to endure hardship And if you send me the other fifty pistols as a sign that the love I have enjoyed is doomed, I will accept the sentence in obedience to your wishes, and take them in the spirit of a friend who deserves no better A friend, I shall always be as long as I live, and were there more truth in what we imagine I should still consider myself to be something more than that at the moment of writing

LETTERS 37 38 39 These three letters were printed for the first time in the Conservateur [*v* note Letter 28] and reprinted by Emile Colombey in his Correspondance authentique de Ninon de Lenclos [Paris 1886] They are translated here for the first time from the text of the Conservateur collated with Colombey's and Planhol's texts

38

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1670]

With all due deference to that old dreamer who considered no body happy this side of the grave,[1] I regard you though living still, as the happiest creature there has ever been You have been loved by the most honourable men in the world and been in love long enough to leave none of its pleasures untasted and yet with judgment enough to avoid the vexation of a languishing flame Never has the happiness of your sex been carried so far There are but few Princesses in the world who would not feel the hardness of their condition in comparison with yours not

[1] Cf Montaigne Essays Bk I 18 Solon said that Men however much Fortune has favoured them cannot call themselves happy till they have been seen to pass over the last day of their life

a Saint in her Convent, who would not gladly exchange her peace of mind for the agreable tumult of your heart. The torment of love is the only one you have felt, and you better than any one know that in love all other pleasures are not worth the trouble. And now that the flower of your early youth has faded, (it is a hard word, but one that you have written to me so often that I do but repeat it), your face retains so much charm, and your mind so much grace, that without your discrimination in the choice of your visitors, there would be at your gates a throng of disinterested persons as large as that which frequents the Court where there is more to be had. Even goodness is mixed with your charm, so that while a lover may reveal to you his passion, a friend may confide in you his secret. Your word is the surest thing a man can rely on, and when you have promised him with seigneurial authority, a hundred pistols, he may count on them as already received. From this exact sense of honour, I must turn to the lie you made to oblige your friend: that you saw but two days ago those who were buried three months before. And if anyone was impertinent enough to say that he had attended the funeral, you vigorously maintained that he mistook the burial for some baptism or marriage ceremony. With such merits, one is not surprised to find Statesmen at your table; for my part I'm astonished that you yourself do not govern some great realm, wherein all men would be happier than they were in Cyprus in the days of the *Fair Goddess*.

Away, my dear, let us away to India to practise the cult of that race I have mentioned. There you live for centuries, and not a minute of them passes without a taste of pleasure I must admit that you have profited admirably in this part of the globe, by the discovery that you were three years younger than you thought Alas! you should have great pity on us other Mortals, who add day unto day, and draw swiftly

to our end When your age seems to you a trifle too advanced, you turn about and the years slip from you with less trouble than a chemise would in this cold weather Mine march ever onwards, but however conscious I may be of a decline from my early strength it would compensate for the loss, if I could maintain in its present state what remains Would to God we were together in some clean and tidy little house married after the fashion, which is copied here as well as in Madrid Doubtless we should spend much upon delicacy of wit but we should allow the body to provide a part of our pleasures to prevent its partner from taking all the credit In any case I should put some Oriental notions into your head, which would be worth more than French realities I have shewn the testimony of your existence to the Comte *de* [*Rieux*] [1] who was a little surprised at the resurrection He had heard of Lazarus s after three days, he did not imagine that it could be done at the end of three months Farewell I would gladly know if all is well with the lute

LETTER 38 [*v* note Letter 37]

39

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1671]

An over scrupulous man is always inclined to be a little cruel for it is no easy thing for virtue to subsist with an even temper I sent you an excellent letter in which I pointed out to you the merit of my paying in advance Although I had given my word I do not believe that *Marc Anthony* Philosopher and Emperor withal ever paid his creditors in advance

[1] The French texts read *de Rés* an obvious misprint for *de Rieux* [*v* note Letter 30]

And yet that is what I have done for you and for poor Monsieur *D'Elbène*. By rights I should have put my self in your position, and before keeping my word, should have waited until I had settled my own affairs, from which I have not yet received a shilling. But I considered both of you more to be pitied than my self, and so I handed over to you a hundred pistols on the security of a sum of a thousand which, as I have said, was not owing to me until my own business had been concluded. That is some consolation; and if you think about it seriously you will realize that when a Banker is above reproach he must not be made fun of. The cold, an ineffectual pen, and a servant of Monsieur *D'Hervart's* whom I am keeping waiting, prevent me from saying more, but love me enough to bear with my severity. I told you that my charms had changed into solid and serious qualities, and you know that it is forbidden to jest with a *Person of Repute*!

LETTER 39 [*v.* note, Letter 37]

40

TO THE COMTE DE LIONNE

[1671]

Altho I should not regret Monsieur *de Lionne* the Minister out of my own Interest; yet out of mere regard to you, I would have receiv'd the news of his Death with great Sorrow.[1] I am inform'd he is generally lamented at Paris; and I can assure you, that the Foreigners honour his memory with the same

[1] Hugues de Lionne, the Secretary of State, died in 1671, the year in which Lauzun was sent to the fortress of Pignerol, "which news, says Des Maizeaux, went the nearer to his [Saint Evremond's] heart, because he thereby lost two illustrious Friends who had great interest at Court"


CHEVALIER SEIGNEUR DE SEMONVILLE
Je suis peu Seuere, mais Sage
Philosophe, mais amoureux
Mon art est de me rendre heureux
Jy reuss en faut il dauantage.

" Although he did not pretend to over rigid morals yet he had all the qualities of a man of honour He was just generous and grateful, and full of goodness and generosity

Des Maizeaux

[*To face page* 111

sentiments that the French entertain of him Whatever was the merit of the great Ministers of our State, foreign Nations did ever rejoice at their Death, and 'twas a long time before they could pass from the hatred of their Persons, to the veneration of their Virtues Monsieur *de Lionne* is the only man whose Death was apprehended, and who has made the world sensible of their Loss at the same instant he died To enlarge on the Death of Great Men, is to add grief and affliction to Death herself she has no need of such helps to be ghastly, which makes me break off this Discourse, to assure you, that no man can be more truly than I am, *&c*

LETTER 40 [Works 1728 II 25]

41

TO THE MARESCHAL DE CRÉQUI WHO ASK'D THE TEMPER OF MY MIND, AND MY THOUGHTS OF ALL THINGS, IN MY OLD AGE

[1671]

When we are young, the popular Opinion sways us, and we are more solicitous to gain the esteem of others than of our selves But when arriv'd to old Age, we are apt to have a less value for foreign things, and are most taken up with our selves, when we are ready to be wanting to our selves It is with Life as with our other Possessions all is wasted when we think our stock greatest, and we are seldom frugal, but when there remains little to be managed Hence we see young men squander (as it were) their being in which they think they have a long term of years to come but we become more dear to our selves, as we are nearest losing our selves Heretofore my roving wandering fancy, rambled after all manner of foreign objects at present my mind contracts it self

to the body, and unites more straitly with it: not, indeed, out of any sense of pleasure from such an alliance, but out of necessity of the mutual succour and assistance, which they endeavour to afford one another.

In this languishing condition, I yet retain some Pleasures; but I have lost all sense of Vice, without knowing whether this change be owing to the infirmity of a decay'd Body, or the moderation of a Mind better improv'd in Wisdom than heretofore. I fear my Age has a greater share in it than my Virtue; and that I have more reason to complain, than brag of the obedience of my Inclinations. And, indeed, it were preposterous for me to ascribe to my Reason the power of subjecting my Desires, if they are too weak to revolt: so that what Wisdom soever men at my years may boast of, it is hard to distinguish whether those Passions, we now no longer feel, be subdued or extinguish'd.

Whatever it be, when our senses are no longer affected by external objects, nor our souls mov'd by their impressions, it is properly no more than a state of Indolence: yet is not this Indolence without its Charms. For to think himself exempt from all uneasiness, is enough to give joy to a reasonable man. The enjoyment of Pleasures is not always required: the privation of Pain well managed, renders our condition sufficiently happy.

When any misfortune befel me, I was naturally little sensible of it, without dashing this happy constitution with any thoughts of Constancy: for Constancy is only dwelling longer upon our miseries. It appears the most amiable Virtue in the world to those who are under no afflictions; but is truly an additional torment to such as suffer. Resistance only frets us; and instead of easing the first Pain, begets a second: without resistance we suffer only the Evils inflicted on us; with it, our own improvements too. For this reason, under my present Misfortunes, I resign

all to nature, and reserve my Prudence for such a juncture of time, as I have nothing to suffer Then by reflecting upon my own Indolence, I am pleas'd with the Pains I endure not, and by this means make happy the most common state of Life

Experience is form'd with Age, and Wisdom is commonly the result of Experience But when this Virtue is ascrib'd to old men, it does not follow that they are always masters of it This is certain, that they have always the liberty to be wise, and to knock off decently those fetters which prejudice has put upon the world They only are allow d to take things for what they really are Reason has prevail d in almost all the first Institutions, but it has been afterwards almost quite over run by Fancy Now Age only has the power to drive out the one from what she had usurp'd, and to restore the other to what she had lost

For my part I observe religiously all real Duties The imaginary I decline or admit, as I like or dislike them For in things to which I am not oblig d, I think it equal Wisdom to reject what does not please me as to accept what does Every day frees me from one link at least of the chain, nor is it less for the advantage of those from whom I disengage my self, than of me who regain my Liberty They are as great gainers in the loss of a useless man as I should have been a loser, by idly devoting my self any longer to them

Of all ties, that of Friendship is the only one that is endearing to me, and were it not for the disgrace of having my Affection slighted, I cou'd love merely for the pleasure of loving even where I should not be belov d again In Love ill plac'd, the sentiments of Amity entertain us purely by their own agreeable sweetness but we ought to divest our selves of a just hatred, for the interest of our own quiet Happy were that mind which could entirely resist some Passions and only unbend it self to some others It would

then be void of Fear, Sadness, Hatred, or Jealousy. It wou'd desire, without Violence; hope, without Uneasiness, and enjoy, without Transport.

The State of Virtue is not a State of Indolence. We suffer in it a perpetual conflict betwixt Duty and Inclination Sometimes we admit what's shocking to us, and sometimes oppose what we like, being generally under a Constraint, both in what we do, and in what we forbear. The State of Wisdom is sweet and calm: it reigns peaceably over our movements, being only to govern well as Subjects, what Virtue was to combat as Enemies

I can say one thing of my self, as extraordinary as true, *viz.* that I never felt in my self any conflict between Passion and Reason My Passion never oppos'd what I resolv'd out of Duty, and my Reason readily comply'd with what a sense of Pleasure inclin'd me to I don't aim at praise on account of this easy agreement; on the contrary, I confess I have often been the more vicious for it. Not out of any perverse disposition to Evil, but because the Vice was entertain'd as a Pleasure, instead of appearing as a Crime.

It is certain, the nature of things is much better discovered by Reflection on them when past, than by their impressions when felt. Besides, the great commerce with the world, hinders all attention in youth. What we see in others, hinders us from examining well our selves Crowds please us at an age, when we love (as one may say) to diffuse our selves. Multitudes grow troublesome at another, when we naturally return to our selves, or, at most, to a few Friends, who are most strictly united to us

'Tis this humour, that insensibly withdraws us from Courts We begin thro' that to seek some medium between assiduous attendance and retirement. We grow afterwards asham'd to shew an old face among young fellows, who, instead of taking our Gravity for Wisdom, laugh at us for appearing in publick Places,

where nothing but Gallantry and Gaiety is to be seen Let us not flatter our selves with our judgment a brisk buffoonry will run it down, and the false glittering of a youthful fancy, will turn to ridicule, the most delicate of our Conversations If we have wit, let us make a better use of it in private Companies, for in a crowd the qualities of the mind maintain themselves but ill, against the advantages of the body

This justice which we are oblig'd to do our selves, ought not to make us unjust to the young men We ought not superciliously to cry up our own times, or with moroseness perpetually run down the present, which is favourable to them Let us not rail at Pleasures when we are past them, or censure Diversions, whose only crime is our incapacity to enjoy them

Our Judgments ought to be always the same We may live but must not judge by humour There is in mine something singular which makes me attend more the trouble than the pomp of Magnificence Shows Feasts, and great Assemblies invite me to the sight of them but the inconveniencies I must suffer deter me The elegant Harmony of Concerts, engages not me so much as the difficulty of adjusting them tires me Plenty disgusts me at meals, and Rarities seem to be an affected curiosity My fancy cannot recommend any thing to my palate by the scarcity But I am for the choice of things easily to be had, that I may preserve a Delicacy independent upon Fancy

OF READING AND THE CHOICE OF BOOKS

I am as fond of reading as ever, because it depends more particularly on the mind, which decays not like the senses but in truth I seek in Books my Pleasure rather than my Instruction As I have less time for practice I have less curiosity to learn I have more need of a stock of life, than of methods of living and the little that remains is better entertain'd and

cherish'd by things agreeable, than instructive. The Latin Authors afford me the most, and I read whatever I think fine, a thousand times over without being cloy'd.

A nice choice has confin'd me to a few Books, in which I seek rather sound than fine Wit; and the true Taste (to use a Spanish Expression) is generally found in the writings of considerable men. I am pleas'd to discover in *Tully's Epistles*,[1] both his own Character, and that of those Persons of Quality that wrote to him. As for *Tully* himself, he never divests himself of his Rhetorick, and the least recommendation to his most intimate friend, is as artificially insinuated, as if he were to prepossess a stranger in an affair of the greatest consequence in the world. The *Letters* of the rest have not those turns: but in my mind, they have more good sense than his, and this makes me judge very advantageously of the great and general abilities of the Romans at that time.

Our Authors perpetually cry up the age of *Augustus*, upon the account of *Virgil* and *Horace*, and perhaps more yet upon the score of *Maecenas*, who encouraged men of Learning, than for those men of learning themselves. It is certain, nevertheless, that their Parts, as well as Courages, began at that time to decay. Greatness of soul was converted to circumspect Conduct, and sound Discourse to polite Conversation: and if we consider what remains of *Maecenas*, I know not whether he had not something effeminate, which was made to pass for delicate. *Maecenas* was *Augustus's* great Favourite, the man that pleas'd, and whom all the polite and sprightly wits endeavour'd to please: now is it not likely that his Judgment over-rul'd the rest, that they affected his manner, and aped, as much as they cou'd, his character?

Augustus himself leaves us no great idea of his Latinity. What we see of *Terence*, what was reported

[1] i e Cicero's Letters

at Rome of the politeness of *Scipio* and *Laelius*, the remains of *Caesar*, and what we have of *Cicero*, with the complaint of this last for the loss of what he calls *sales*, *lepores*, *venustates*, *urbanitas*, *amœnitas*, *festivitas*, *jucunditas*, all these together I say, make me believe, upon better consideration, that we must pitch on some other time than that of *Augustus*, to find the sound and agreeable Wit of the Romans, as well as the pure and natural graces of their tongue

It may be said, that *Horace* had a very nice palate in all these matters, which persuades me, that the rest of his Contemporaries had not For the nicety of his relish consisted chiefly in finding the ridicule of others Were it not for the impertinencies, false manners, and affectations which he laugh'd at, his sense wou'd not at this very day appear so very just

OF POETRY

I own the Augustan age to have been that of excellent Poets but it follows not, that it was that of sound Judgment Poetry requires a peculiar Genius, that agrees not overmuch with good sense It is sometimes the language of Gods, sometimes of Buffoons, rarely that of a Gentleman It delights in figures and fictions, always beside the reality of things tho' it be that only, that can satisfy a sound Understanding

Not but that there is something noble in making agreeable Verses but we must have a great command of our genius otherwise the mind is possess'd with something foreign which hinders it from the free management of it self *He's a Blockhead*, says the Spaniard *that can't make two Verses, and a Fool that makes four* I own if this Maxim prevail'd over all the world we should want a thousand fine works the reading of which gives us a very delicate pleasure, but this saying respects men of business, rather than profess'd Poets Besides, those that are capacitated for such great performances, will not resist the force

of their Genius, for what I can say, and it is certain, that amongst Authors, those only will write few Verses, who find themselves more cramp'd by their own barrenness, than by my reasons.

Excellent Poets are as requisite for our entertainment, as great Mathematicians for our use: but it is sufficient for us to be acquainted with their works, and not to engage our selves in the solitary Enthusiasm of the one, or to exhaust our spirits in Meditation, like the other.

Comick Poets are of all most proper for the converse of the world: for they make it their business to draw to the life what passes in it, and to express the sentiments and passions of Men How new a turn soever may be given to old thoughts, that sort of Poetry is very tedious which is fill'd with similes of the *Morning*, *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*. Our Descriptions of a calm, and a tempestuous Sea, represent nothing which the Antients have not express'd much better Now a-days we have not only the same Ideas, but the very same Expressions, and Rhymes. I never hear of the harmony of Birds, but I prepare my self for purling Streams, the Shepherdesses are always lolling upon Fern, and you may sooner find a Grove without a Shade in its proper seat, than in our Verses. This must necessarily at length be very tedious: which cannot happen in Comedy, where with pleasure we see those things represented, which we may perform, and where we feel motions like those we see express'd

A Tale of Woods, Rivers, Meadows, Fields, and Gardens, makes but a very languishing impression upon us, unless their beauties be wholly new: but what concerns Humanity, its inclinations, tendernesses, and affections, finds something in the inmost recesses of our souls prepar'd to receive it: the same nature produces and receives 'em, and they are easily transfus'd from the Actors to the Spectators.

OF SOME SPANISH, ITALIAN, AND FRENCH BOOKS

The delicacy of Love sooths me, and its tenderness touches me, and as in Spain they love the best of any Country in the world, I am never weary of reading in their Authors amorous Adventures I am more affected with the passion of one of their Lovers, than I should be with my own, were I yet capable of any The very imagination of those Amours raises in me certain motions for the Gallant, which I could never feel for my self

There is, perhaps, as much Wit in the other writings of that Nation as in ours, but it is a kind of wit that gives no satisfaction, except that of *Cervantes* in *Don Quixot*, which I could read all my life, without being disgusted one single moment Of all the Books I ever read *Don Quixot* is that of which I shou'd be most ambitious to have been the Author Nothing in my opinion, can contribute more to the forming in us a true taste of every thing I wonder how *Cervantes* cou'd as it were out of the mouth of one of the greatest Fools in the world shew himself master of all the understanding and knowledge imaginable I admire the variety of his Characters which are of the most uncommon stamp in the world and at the same time the most natural *Quevedo*, indeed, appears a very ingenious Author, but I esteem him more for his thought of burning all his own Books when he read *Don Quixot* than for having been able to compose em

I am not acquainted enough with Italian Poetry to taste its delicacy or admire its graces and beauties I meet with some Histories in that tongue above all the Moderns and some Treatises of Politicks, even above what the Antients have written As for the Morality of the Italians it is full of *Concetti*, or pointed Witticisms, which rather shew a fancy that endeavours to glitter than a solid sense founded on deep reflections

I have a great curiosity for every thing that is fine in French; and am very much distasted at a thousand Authors, who seem only to have written for the reputation of being Authors. I read not for the credit of having read abundance; which ties me up to certain Books, where I am assur'd to meet satisfaction.

Montaigne's Essays, *Malherbe's Poems*, *Corneille's Tragedies*, and *Voiture's Works*, have established to themselves, as it were, a title to please me during life [1] *Montaigne* has not the same success with others, thro' the whole course of their lives. As he particularly lays open Men, the young and the old are pleas'd to see themselves in him, by the resemblance of their thoughts. The space intermediate to these Ages, takes 'em off from Nature to other Professions, and then they find less in *Montaigne* that fits 'em. The Art Military employs the General, Politicks the Statesman, Divinity the Churchman; and Law the Judge. *Montaigne* returns upon us, when Nature has brought us back again to our selves; and when an advanc'd age, in which we truly feel what we are, recalls the Prince as well as his meanest Subjects, from a concern for his Dignity, to the more near and sensible concern for his Person

I write not this out of any impulse of Vanity, which prompts men to make their fancies publick. I feel my very soul (if I may so speak) in what I say; and understand my self better by expressing the Notion I have form'd of my self, than I could by private

[1] It is said that a man is known by the books he reads Saint Evremond's choice is characteristic of the older generation, whose youth coincided with the minority of Louis XIV In 1671 the writers he mentions were rapidly losing their former popularity Montaigne's quiet scepticism had been superseded by the Cartesian philosophy, Malherbe's poetry by Boileau's, Corneille's tragedies by Racine's, while Voiture and his school had succumbed to the attack of Moliere's "Les Precieuses ridicules"

thoughts and inward reflections The idea a man has of himself by a bare attention to internal meditations, is always a little confus d The Image which is outwardly express'd is much more exact, and gives us a much truer judgment of our selves, when it is again submitted to the examination of the mind, after having been laid before our eyes Besides the flattering opinion of our own merit loses half its charms, as soon as it comes into the light, and the complacency of self love insensibly vanishing, leaves behind it only a disgust of its sweetness, and shame for a vanity as foolishly entertain'd, as judiciously quitted

To equal *Malherbe* to the Antients, I require nothing finer than his own Compositions I wou'd only strike out of his Works what is not worthy of him It were injustice to make him yield to any one but it will suffice for the honour of our own Judgments, if we make him give place to himself

We may say the same of *Corneille* He would be above all the Tragedians of Antiquity if he were not in some of his Pieces much below himself He is so admirable in what is fine, that he takes away all patience for what is indifferent What in him is not excellent methinks is naught not that it is really so, but because it wants the perfection of the rest It is not enough for him to please us lightly, he s bound to touch us to the very quick Some Authors may be allow'd simply to move us and these emotions are pleasing enough, when we have nothing else in view than to be tenderly affected, but with *Corneille* our souls are prepar'd for Raptures, and if they be not transported they are left in a condition more uneasy than languor It is, I confess difficult always to charm, very hard at pleasure to raise a mind from its temper and, as it were to unhinge a Soul but *Corneille* by having done it so often has laid upon himself an obligation to do it always Let him expunge what is not noble enough for him, and he will

leave us in a full admiration of those Beauties which no one can parallel.

I should not excuse *Voiture* for a great many of his *Letters*, which he ought to have suppress'd, had himself been the publisher [1]: but he was like some Fathers, equally kind and prudent, who have a natural affection for their Children, and, in secret, cherish those that want worth, thereby to avoid exposing their judgments to the publick by their indulgence. He might have shew'd all his fondness to some of his Works: for there is something in 'em so ingenious, so polite, so fine, and so agreeable, that it takes away all relish of the *Sales Attici*, and the *Roman Urbanities*, eclipses quite thro' the Wit of the Italians and the Gallantry of the Spaniards.

We have in French some particular Pieces of admirable beauty; such are the *Funeral Orations* of the Queen of England, and that of the Duchess of Orleans by the Bishop of Condom.[2] There is a certain Spirit diffus'd thro' those discourses, which gives us as great an opinion of the Author before he is known, as of his work after 'tis read. His Character is impress'd on all that he says, so that altho I never saw him, I pass easily from the admiration of his Discourse to that of his Person.

OF CONVERSATION

How great soever the pleasure of Reading is to me, yet that of Conversation will ever most sensibly affect me. The acquaintance of the Ladies would afford me

[1] Voiture's works were not collected and published until after his death in 1648, by his nephew Pinchène, assisted by Conrart and Chapelain

[2] Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), the most renowned preacher of Louis XIV's reign, Bishop of Condom, 1669, Preceptor to the Dauphin 1670–9, and finally, in 1681, Bishop of Meaux These two funeral orations, masterpieces of rhetoric, but little else, were printed in 1669 and 1670 respectively.

the sweetest, if the satisfaction we find in conversing with the fair, did not put us to the trouble of being upon our guard against their Charms Yet this is a violence I rarely suffer as my Age renders me unacceptable, my Experience makes me nice, and if they can't be pleas'd with me, I am, by way of return, as hardly satisfy'd with them There are some, indeed, whose Merits make a considerable impression on my mind but their Beauty has little influence on my heart and if I am at any time surprized by it, I presently reduce my Passion to a pleasing reasonable Friendship, that has none of the uneasiness of Love

The first merit with the Ladies is to be in love with them, the next, the being the Confidant of their inclinations, the third, the ingenious improving and setting off all that is amiable in them if nothing will win their hearts, we may, at least, gain upon their minds by praise for next to the Lover, to whom all must yield, he pleases 'em most, who affords 'em means of being better pleas'd with themselves When you converse with them, take great care never to leave 'em in Indifference, they are, from their souls, averse to such coldness wherefore, either make your self belov'd, or indulge their Passions, or make 'em find themselves more lovely For, after all, Love of some sort or other they must have their hearts are never void of that passion Direct a poor heart how to employ it

'Tis true some of 'em can have esteem and even tenderness without love, and others there are as capable of secrecy as the most trusty of our friends I know some that have no less Wit and Discretion than Charms and Beauty but those are rarities that nature wantonly bestows on the world, either by design or caprice and we can draw no consequences in favour of the generality from things so particular, and from qualities so uncommon Women so extra ordinary seem to have borrow d the merit of Men,

and, perhaps, 'tis a kind of revolt from their sex, to shake off the natural conditions of it for the real advantages of ours.

I confess, I have formerly been more difficult in the choice of the Men with whom I convers'd, than at present I am, and I think my self not so much a loser in point of Delicacy, as a gainer in point of Sense. I then sought for men that could please me in every thing, I now seek every thing that may please me in any man. A man in all respects agreeable, is too great a rarity, and it is no wisdom to hunt for what we are hardly ever like to find. That delicacy of Pleasure, which our Imagination paints to us, is what we seldom enjoy, the sickly nice fancy gives us a disrelish of those things which we might possess, during the whole course of our lives Not that, to say truth, it is impossible to find such Jewels, but it is very rarely that Nature forms 'em, and that Fortune favours us with 'em. My good stars made me know one of this rank in France, and another of equal merit in a foreign Country, who was the whole delight of my life. Death has robb'd me of this treasure, and I can never think on that cruel day on which my Lord *d'Aubigny* died,[1] but I may say, with a true and sensible regret,

Quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum, sic Dii voluistis, habebo [2]

In the measures you will take for Society, you must reckon not to find good things separately Expect to meet solidity with prolixity, agreeableness with want of sense; and science with ridicule You will find these Qualities promiscuously blended, not only among those men whom we may, at pleasure, make

[1] Lord d'Aubigny died in the month of November, 1665 [*v* note, Letter 11]

[2] Virgil *Aeneid* V vv 49, 50
" A day for ever sad, for ever dear " Dryden's Translation

choice of, or avoid but even among those whom our interest or other ties as obligatory shall bind you to I have convers'd with a Man of the brightest natural parts in the world, who being sometimes weary of the happy facility of his Genius, engag d in arguments of Science and Religion, in which he betray d a ridiculous ignorance I know one of the most learned men in Europe,[1] of whom one may learn a thousand things, curious or profound, in whom, nevertheless, you will find a foolish credulity in every thing extraordinary, fabulous, or exceeding belief

That great master of the Stage, to whom the Romans are more beholden for the beauty of their sentiments than to their own wit or virtue, *Corneille* who sufficiently discovers himself without being named becomes an ordinary man when he speaks for himself He dares say any thing for a Greek or a Roman a Frenchman or Spaniard abates his Courage, and when he speaks for him he is quite dispirited He racks his Imagination for all that is noble to adorn his old Heroes and you would say, that he debarr d himself the advantage of his own wealth, as if he were not worthy the use of it

If you know the world perfectly, you will find in it abundance of men valuable for their Talents, and as contemptible for their Failings Expect not they should always exert their abilities, and discreetly cover their infirmities You shall see them often slight their Virtues and fondly indulge their Defects It rests upon your judgment to make a better choice than themselves, and by your address to draw from them that worth which they could not easily communicate

For these ten years past which I have spent in foreign Countries I have found as much Pleasure and been as happy in the enjoyment of Conversation as if I had been all the time in France I have met with persons of as great worth as quality whose

[1] Dr Isaac Vossius [note of Des Maizeaux]

Society has been the greatest comfort of my life. I have known men as witty as any I have ever seen, who have join'd the Pleasure of their Friendship, to that of their Company. I have known some Ambassadors of such bright parts, that they seem'd to me to make a considerable loss, whenever the duty of their Character suspended the exercise of their private excellencies.

I formerly thought that there were no well-bred and polite men but in our Court; that the effeminacy of warmer Climates, and a kind of barbarity in the colder, hinder'd the Natives from being rais'd to this pitch, except very rarely. But experience has, at length, convinc'd me, that there are such every where; and if I have not discover'd it soon enough, it is because it is difficult for a French Man to relish any but those of his own Country. Every Nation has its Excellence, with a certain turn proper and peculiar to its Genius. My Judgment, too much wedded to our own air, rejected as faulty what was foreign to us. Because we see them imitate us in the fashion of things exterior, we wou'd impose upon them the imitation of us, even in the dress of Virtue too. In truth, the grounds of any essential Quality, are every where the same · but we endeavour to fit the extrinsicks to our humour, and those among us that pay the greatest deference to Reason, must have with it something to gratify their fancies. To speak ingenuously, the difference I find between us and others, in the air, or manner that distinguishes Nations, is, that ours is industriously affected, and that of other Nations impress'd by nature, as it were in an indelible Character.

In all my life, I have never known but two persons that were universally taking, and those two differently. The one had agreeable qualities of all sorts, for the ordinary sort of Men, for the Humorists, and even for the Fantastical, and he seem'd to have in his nature wherewith to please every body. The other had so

many rare accomplishments, that he might assure himself of esteem where ever Virtue is rever d The first was insinuating and never fail'd to gain the Affections The second was somewhat proud, but yet commanded Esteem To complete this difference, a man gave himself up with pleasure to the insinuations of the former, and submitted oftentimes tho with reluctance, to the worth of the latter I had a strict Friendship with them both, and can say, that I never saw any thing in the one, but what was agreeable, or in the other, but what deserv d esteem

OF LITERATURE AND THE CIVIL LAW

When I am depriv d of the conversation of the Men of the World, I have recourse to the Learned and if I meet with men skill d in polite Literature, I think my self no great loser by exchanging the delicacy of the present, for that of past ages But we rarely meet with persons that have a true Judgment, which in many Scholars renders Literature a very tiresome knowledge Of all the men I ever knew Antiquity is the most indebted to Mr *Waller*[1] he lends it his beautiful Imagination, and his nice and delicate Judgment, so that he enters into the genius of the Antients not only to understand rightly what they thought, but still to embelish their thoughts

I have seen within a few years, abundance of Criticks, and but few good Judges Now, I don't affect that sort of learned men, who rack their brains to restore a Reading, which is not mended by the restitution The whole mystery of their Learning lies in what we might as well be ignorant of and they are absolute strangers to what's really worth knowing As they are incapable of having nice Sentiments and

[1] Waller the English poet who first made writing easily an Art, one of the precursors with Sir John Denham of the Augustan age of English literature [*v* note Letter 23]

Thoughts, so 'tis impossible for them to enter into the delicacy of a Sentiment, or the fineness of a Thought They may succeed well enough in expounding Grammarians, who applied themselves to the same study, and whose genius was the same: but they can never hit that of a polite, well-bred man among the Antients, because theirs is diametrically opposite to it. In History, they mind neither Men nor Affairs: they lay the whole stress on Chronology, and for the date of a Consul's Death, will neglect the knowledge of his Character, and of the transactions during his Consulship. *Tully*, with them, will never be any more than a declaimer of *Orations*, or *Caesar* than a Writer of *Commentaries*. the Consul and the General escape their notice, the Spirit that animates their Works is unperceiv'd; and the principal matters they treat of, unknown

I own I value infinitely a *Criticism on the Sense*, if the expression may be allow'd. Such is the excellent work of *Machiavel* upon the *Decades* of *Livy*; and such would be the reflections of Monsieur *de Rohan* upon *Caesar's Commentaries*, had he penetrated deeper into his Designs, and expos'd to a clearer light the secret springs of his Conduct. I must own nevertheless, that he has equall'd the penetration of *Machiavel* in his Remarks upon the clemency of *Caesar* in the Civil Wars. But we may see, that his own experience of such Wars, furnish'd him with abundance of hints for those judicious Observations.

Next to the study of polite Learning (for which I have a more particular affection) I love the science of those great Lawyers and Civilians, who might themselves be Legislators, who re-ascend to that original Justice that settled human Society, who know what Liberty nature allows in establish'd Governments, and how far the natural liberty of private Persons is restrain'd for the publick good by necessary Politicks These instructions might be found in the

conversation of Monsieur *Sluse*,[1] with as much pleasure as profit From *Hobbes*, that great Genius of England, we might also receive these noble lights, tho' with less exactness because he carries some things too far, and is altogether upon extremes in others

Were *Grotius* yet alive, all things might be learned of that universal Scholar who is yet more valuable for his Reasonings than for his Learning Now he is dead, his Writings resolve the most important difficulties, and were Justice only regarded they might be a standing rule to all Nations in points of War and Peace His Book, *De Jure Belli & Pacis* ought to be the chief study of foreign Princes, their Ministers, and generally of all such as have any share in the Government of the People

Nay even the knowledge of that Law which descends to the affairs of private Men, ought not to be slighted But this is left to the care of the Gentlemen of the Gown, and denied to Princes as a thing below them tho' every moment of their Reign, they give Decrees, or issue out Warrants that extend to the Fortunes Liberties, and Lives of their Subjects They are only entertain d with harangues about Valour, which is only an instrument of Destruction, and Discourses of Liberality which is but a more regular method of squandering unless they be bounded by Justice 'Tis true, the Doctrine of every Virtue ought to be suited to the necessities of every one s temper to infuse liberality into the Covetous to excite the Unactive with the thirst of Glory, and curb, as much as is possible, the Ambitious with the reins of Justice But amongst all the diversity of tempers Justice is still most requisite, for it keeps up

[1] A canon of St Lambert at Liége and brother to M Sluse Secretary of the Briefs to the Pope and afterwards a Cardinal [note of Des Maizeaux] i e Rene de Sluse who devised methods similar to Fermat s for the differentiation of complicated irrational fractions

order as well in him that does it, as in them to whom it is done Nor is this a constraint that limits the Power of a Prince, for in doing it to others, he learns to do it to himself, and so it is in him a voluntary act, tho' we necessarily receive it from his power.

I read not an History of any Prince better educated than *Cyrus* the Great. They were not contented exactly to inform him what Justice was in all respects, but they made him put their Instructions in practice, as often as occasion offer'd; so that they did, at the same time, imprint the notions of Justice on his mind, and establish a habit of being just in his Soul The education of *Alexander* was of somewhat too large an extent: he was taught the knowledge of every thing in nature, but himself His Ambition went afterwards as far as his Learning, and having endeavour'd to know all, he grew desirous to conquer all But he had little or no method in his Conquests, and abundance of irregularity in his Life; for want of knowing what he ow'd to the publick, to private men, and to himself.

No men whatsoever can take too effectual a care to be just, for they have naturally too strong a bias the contrary way Justice is the foundation and the fence of all Society; without it we should still be Savages and Vagabonds, and our impetuosity would soon reduce us to our primitive confusion, out of which we are happily extricated Yet instead of chearfully acknowledging the benefit, we find some reluctance in submitting to that happy subjection it keeps us in, and still long after that fatal Liberty which would prove the unhappiness of our Lives.

When the Scripture tells us that the Just are few, it means not, in my opinion, that no men are inclin'd to good Works: but it seems to intimate, how little they are inclin'd to act as they should, out of a principle of Justice And indeed, were men's good actions examin'd, they would most of them be found to have

their source from the consideration of some other Virtues Good Nature, Friendship, and Benevolence, are the ordinary springs from whence they flow Charity relieves our neighbours' wants, Liberality bestows, and Generosity obliges Justice, which ought to partake in all, is laid aside as burdensome, and necessity alone gives it a share in our actions Nature endeavours to find a kind of Self complacency in those first Virtues, where we act upon pleasing motives but in this she finds a secret violence, where another's right extorts from us what we owe, and we rather acquit our selves of our own Obligations, than lay any upon them by our Beneficence

It is a secret aversion to Justice that makes us fonder of giving than returning, of obliging than acknowledging Thus we see the most liberal generous men, are not usually the most just. Justice includes a regularity that lays a constraint upon them as being founded on a constant order of Reason, opposite to those natural impulses, which are the hinges upon which Liberality almost always moves There is I know not what heroical in great Liberality, as well as in great Valour, and there is a great analogy between those two Virtues, the one raising the Soul above the consideration of Wealth, and the other pushing on Courage beyond a concern for Life But with all these gay and generous Motives, without good Conduct, the one becomes ruinous, and the other fatal

Those, whom cross accidents of Fortune have undone, are pitied by all the world, because it is a misfortune attending the condition of humanity to which every body is liable those that are reduced to Misery by vain profusion raise more contempt than commiseration because it is the effect of a private Folly, from which every man has the good conceit to think himself free Add to this, that nature always suffers a little by compassion and to relieve her self

of an uneasy thought, she contemplates the folly of the Prodigal, instead of resting upon the prospect of the Beggar. All things consider'd, it is enough for private men to be beneficent, nor ought this to proceed from a facility of nature, that lazily parts with what it has not strength to keep. I depise the weakness which is preposterously call'd *Liberality*; and hate no less the vanity of those that never do a kindness but for the pleasure of boasting of it.

OF INGRATITUDE

There are not so many Ungrateful men as 'tis generally thought, because there are not so many generous men as we imagine. He that in silence suppresses a favour receiv'd, is an unthankful man, that deserv'd it not. But he that proclaims one that he has done, turns it to an Injury, shewing to your disgrace the necessity you had of him, and the relief he has given you thro' ostentation. I would have a man of honour somewhat shy of receiving Obligations, and sensible of them when receiv'd: I would have him that obliges, satisfied with the generosity of the Action, and not think of any acknowledgment from the party oblig'd When a return is expected, it is no longer Liberality, it is a sort of Trade, which the Spirit of Interest would introduce into Favours.

'Tis true, there are some persons whom nature has made ungrateful: Ingratitude is the main ingredient in their composition, with that their Heart, their Soul, and every part is season'd: they make no returns to Love, not because they are hard and insensible, but because they are ungrateful.

This *Ingratitude*, which is rooted in one's *Heart* or *Constitution*, is, of all the kinds of it, the most opposite to Humanity. for generous Persons may sometimes shake off the remembrance of a benefit, to ease themselves of the trouble that some Obligations are apt to give. But Friendship knits, not fetters us together,

and without some extraordinary violence to nature, it is impossible to resist its tender engaging Charms

I am inclin'd to believe that Women ought not to resist so generous a sentiment, whatever pretence may be suggested, from a regard for Virtue And indeed, they think themselves virtuous, and are only ungrateful, when they refuse their affection to passionate Lovers, who sacrifice every thing for them To be too kind, would be a trespass on the rights of Honour, not to be sensible enough, is to cross the nature of their Hearts, which they ought to keep free from perturbation, if possible, but not from a tender impression

The *Ingratitude of the Soul* is a natural propensity, not to acknowledge a Service, even without a regard to Interest Avarice may sometimes suppress an acknowledgment, to avoid the expense of a return, but pure Ingratitude is, without farther design in it self averse to all Requitals

There is another sort of Ingratitude, founded on a conceit of our own worth, when Self love represents a favour bestow'd upon us, as a piece of justice done to us

The love of Liberty has likewise its Ingratitude, as well as Self love The only subjection it allows is to the Laws, but out of abhorrence of a dependence, it hates the memory of Obligations that shew a superiority in the Benefactor This makes Republicans ungrateful They think that a diminution of their Liberty which is allow'd to Gratitude Thus *Brutus* thought it meritorious to sacrifice his Obligations to Liberty All the kindnesses heap'd on him were converted to injuries, when he began to look upon them as fetters To sum up all, he cou'd kill a Benefactor that was like to become a Master An abominable villany amongst the partisans of Gratitude! An admirable virtue with the sticklers for Liberty!

As there are men purely ungrateful, out of a mere sense of Ingratitude, so there are some merely thankful, out of a pure sense of thankfulness. Their Hearts are sensible not only of good turns, but even of good-will too; and have of themselves a propensity to acknowledge all manner of Obligations

According to the great diversity which is found both in Gratitude and Ingratitude, there are some poor Spirits that think themselves oblig'd by every thing, as well as vain humours, that think themselves oblig'd by nothing

If Self-conceit has its proud ingrates, Distrust of merit has its weak thankful ones, that take common justice for a particular obligation. This diffidence produces an Inclination to Subjection, and the latter is the distinguishing Character of this kind of thankful men As they are incumber'd with Liberty, and asham'd of Servitude, they raise up chimerical Obligations, to give an honourable colour to their dependence.

I will not reckon among the Grateful, those poor wretches that think themselves oblig'd, for not being hurt. They are not only Slaves, but Slaves that have not even the courage to hope well To these wretches, all treatment that is not rigorous is favourable, and every thing that is not an Injury, they think a Benefit

I have but one word more to say about a certain Gratitude of Courtiers, which has not so much respect to the past, as design upon the future They acknowledge Obligations to those whom fortune has plac'd in any post to oblige them; and by an affected Gratitude for favours never done, insinuate themselves into those, in whose power it is to do them, and industriously put themselves in the way of them. This artificial acknowledgment, as 'tis undoubtedly no Virtue, so neither is it a Vice, but rather a dexterity, which it is lawful for a man either to make use of, or guard himself against.

The great ones in requital, have a trick as artificial to excuse themselves from doing kindnesses, as the Courtiers can have to engage them to it They reproach men with Services never done and complain of Ingratitude, tho they have hardly ever obliged any one to draw from hence a specious pretence to oblige no body

But let us dismiss this affected Gratitude, and these mysterious complaints of Ingratitude, and let us see what is to be wish'd for in the pretences to, and the distribution of, Benefits I could wish in those that claim them more Merit than Address, and in the Disposers more Generosity than Ostentation

Justice respects every thing in the distribution of Favours it regulates the Liberality of the giver, and weighs the Merit of the receiver Generosity thus circumstantiated is an admirable Virtue otherwise, it is the motion of a Soul truly noble, but ill govern'd, or a wild vain glorious humour that thinks Reason a clog to it

There are so many things to be consider'd in the distribution of Benefits, that the safest way is always to observe strict Justice, and consult Reason equally both as to those we make the objects of them, and about what we are able to give But even among those that intend strict justice how many are misguided by the error of their temper, either in rewarding or punishing? When we give way to insinuation and yield to complaisance, Self-love represents to us as Justice a Lavishness to them that flatter us, and we reward them for the artifice they use, to deceive our Judgments, and impose upon the imbecillity of our Wills

They deceive themselves yet more easily who mistake a morose severe temper for an inclination to Justice The itch of punishing is ingenious in them to set an ill gloss upon every thing Pleasure with them is vice and Error a crime A man must divest

himself of humanity to escape their rigour. Misled by a false notion of Virtue, they think they chastise Criminals, while they delight in tormenting the Miserable.

If Justice appoints a great Punishment, (which is sometimes necessary) it is proportion'd to some great Crime, but is never harsh or rigorous. Severity and Rigour are no part of it, but spring from the humours of those persons that think they practise it. As these sorts of punishments flow from Justice without Rigour, so likewise does Pardon in some cases, rather than from Clemency To pardon faults of error, is but justice to the failings of our nature: the indulgence we shew to Women that have intrigues, is likewise rather a justice to their weakness, than a pardon of their sin.

OF RELIGION

I might descend to several other particulars relating to Justice, but it is now high time to proceed to Religion, which ought to be our principal care. None but madmen can depend upon a Life that must certainly have an end, and which may end every hour.

Mere curiosity will make us inquisitive to know what shall become of us after Death. We are too dear to our selves to consent to our intire loss: Self-love secretly opposes the notion of Annihilation We are desirous to exist always, and the Mind, which is concern'd in its own preservation, improves this desire, by affording some light into a thing of it self so obscure. On the other hand, the Body finding by certain experience that it must die, and being unwilling to die alone, furnishes reasons to involve the Soul in one common ruin; whilst the Soul frames one to believe, it may subsist for ever I have searched for all the light I could, both from the Antients and Moderns, to assist my reflections in diving into so abstruse a mystery: I have read all that has been

written on the *Immortality of the Soul*, and after I have done so with all possible attention, the clearest proof that I find of the eternity of my Soul, is my own constant desire that it may be so

I wish I had never read Monsieur *Descartes Meditations*[1] the great Reputation of that excellent man among us would have given me some belief of the Demonstration he promises us, but there appeared to me more vanity in the assurance he gives us than solidity in his arguments, and how desirous soever I was to be convinc d by his Reasons, all that I can do in his favour or my own, is to remain in the uncertainty I was in before

I left the study of Metaphysicks to make an enquiry into Religions and returning to that Antiquity which I respect so much I found among the Greeks and Romans, nothing but a superstitious idolatrous Worship or politick human Contrivances established for the Government of Men It was not difficult for me to see the advantages of the Christian Religion over all the rest, and using all my endeavours to submit my self with reverence to the belief of its Mysteries, I let my Reason taste with pleasure the purest and most perfect Morality in the world

Amidst the diversity of Beliefs that divide Christianity, the true Catholick engages me as well by my own free election, were I yet to chuse, as by the habitual impression it has long since made upon me But this adherence to my own does not animate me against other people's belief and I never entertain'd that indiscreet zeal which inspires a hatred for some persons because they do not agree with us in opinion This false Zeal is the result of Self love, and a secret deceit represents to us an excess of complacency in our own Sentiments, under the form of Charity towards our Neighbours

[1] i e Descartes Meditations metaphysiques published in 1641

What we now call RELIGIONS, is indeed but *a difference in Religion*, and not *a different Religion*. I rejoice that my Faith is more sound than a Protestant's: yet instead of hating him for this difference of opinion, I love him because he agrees with me in the Fundamentals. The means at length to agree in the whole, is always to communicate in something. A desire of Re-union can never be inspir'd, till the enmity that arises from division be suppress'd. Men may seek one another as sociable, but they never re-unite with their Enemies Dissimulation and Hypocrisy in Religion, are the only things that ought to be odious: for whoever believes sincerely, altho his Belief should be wrong, deserves Pity, and not Persecution Blindness in the body bespeaks our Compassion, why then should that of the mind excite our Hatred? Under the severest Tyranny of former ages, the Understanding was allow'd its full liberty, but now a-days there are notions among Christians, wherein the persuasion of what one cannot believe is impos'd as a Law! In my opinion, every body ought to be free in his Belief, provided it does not tend to raise Factions that may endanger the publick Tranquillity. Churches do of right belong to Sovereigns, according to whose will and pleasure they are either open'd or shut up, but our own hearts are a private Church, wherein we are allow'd to worship their Master.

Besides the difference of Doctrine in some points peculiar to every Sect, I observe, as it were, a sort of particular Spirit that distinguishes them. The Catholick tends particularly to the Love of God, and good Works We look upon this first Being as an Object sovereignly amiable, and tender Souls are touch'd with the sweet and agreeable Impressions it makes on them Good Works follow necessarily from this principle, for Love once receiv'd within, actuates us without, and puts us upon endeavouring all we can to please him we love All we have to fear in this case is,

leſt the ſource of this Love, the Heart, ſhould be corrupted by the mixture of any Paſſion altogether human It is likewiſe to be feared, that inſtead of obeying the Ordinance of God, we ſhould frame methods of ſerving him according to our own fancies But if this Love be real and pure nothing in the world yields ſuch true ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction The inward joy of devout Souls riſes from a ſecret aſſurance they have of being agreeable to God, and the true mortifications, and holy auſterities are nothing elſe but affectionate Sacrifices of themſelves

The Reformed Religion diveſts men of all confidence in their own merit The opinion of Predeſtination which they begin to be diſguſted with, but dare not forgo leſt they ſhould be thought to recant, leaves the Mind languid unmov'd, without affection under pretence of waiting with ſubmiſſion for the will of Heaven They are content barely to obey and ſeek not to please, and in a ſet common Worſhip make God the object rather of their Regularity than their Love To preſerve Religion in its Purity, the Calviniſts endeavour to reform every thing that appears human, but ſometimes to debar man of what is human, they retrench too much of what is addreſs'd to God Their diſlike of our Ceremonies, makes them induſtrious to refine upon us yet when they have attain'd to this dry naked Purity, they find not in themſelves a ſufficient ſtock of Devotion, and thoſe that are pious amongſt them excite in themſelves a particular Spirit which they think ſupernatural ſo much are they diſguſted with a Regularity which to them ſeems too common

There are in matters of Worſhip two ſorts of humours The one would be always adding to and the other always retrenching what is eſtabliſhed In the firſt there is a hazard of giving too much out ſide to Religion, and covering it with ſo many exteriors

that the real ground of it cannot be seen thro' them. In the other, the danger is, lest after having retrench'd all that appears superfluous, Religion it self should be cut off The Catholick might, indeed, spare some Ceremonies, yet that hinders not, but that men of understanding may see well enough thro' them The Reform'd use too little, and their ordinary Worship is not sufficiently distinguish'd from the common functions of Life In Places where it is not tolerated, the difficulty prevents their disgust, and the dispute raises a warmth that animates them. Where it rules, it produces only an exact compliance with Duty, such as either the Civil Government, or any other obligation might do.

As for Good Works among the Reformed, they are only the effects of their Faith, and the result of their Belief We are agreed on both sides, that every Christian is bound to believe, and live aright, but our ways of expressing it differ · they say, that *good Works without Faith are but dead Works*; and we, that *Faith without Good Works is but dead Faith.*

The Minister *Morus* was wont to say amongst his friends, "That his Church had something too hard in its Tenets, and he advised People never to read *St Paul's Epistles*, without ending with that of *St. James*, for fear, said he, lest *St. Paul's* heat against the merit of Good Works, should insensibly make us somewhat remiss in the practice of them."

It may, in my opinion, be affirm'd, That *St. Peter* and *St James*, who preach'd to people sunk into such deep Corruption as the Jews were, had reason to enforce the necessity of Good Works; for thereby they prescrib'd to them what they wanted, and of which they might themselves be convinc'd But these Apostles would have little advanc'd their Ministry by a discourse about Grace, with a People who thought they had more Faith than all the world besides, who had seen the Miracles perform'd in their favour, and

who had a thousand times experienc d the visible assistances of a God

St Paul acted no less wisely with the Gentiles, it being certain that he would have converted but few people to *Jesus Christ* by the argument of Good Works The Gentiles were just and temperate, upright and innocent firm and resolute, to such a degree as to die for their Country Now to preach Good Works to them was no more than what the Philosophers did, who taught them to live well I own, *Jesus Christ s* Morals were purer but they had nothing that could make a sufficient impression on their minds It was therefore fitting to preach to them the necessity of Grace and as much as was possible, to suppress the confidence they had in their Virtue

Methinks, that since the Reformation, of which the Immorality of the Clergy was either the pretence or reason methinks I say that since that time Christianity has been made to consist in the Doctrine of Articles of Belief Those that set up the Reformation arraign'd our corruption and vice and now a days we object against them our Good Works The very same persons that reproach d us with ill living will now take no other advantage of us than that of pre tending to a purer Faith We allow the necessity of Belief but Charity was commanded by *Jesus Christ* and the Doctrine of Mysteries was not establish'd till a long time after his Death He did not himself express so clearly what he was as what he required, from whence we may conclude that he rather chose to be obey d than to make himself known Our Faith is obscure but our Law is very clearly expressed The necessary points of our Faith are above our apprehension but those of our Duty are suited to the capacities of all the world In a word, God has given us light enough to do well, and we would indulge with it our curiosity of knowing too much and instead of acquiescing in what he is pleased to discover

to us, we would pry into what he has conceal'd from us.

I know that the contemplation of heavenly things does sometimes happily disengage us from the world: but it is frequently no more than mere speculation, and the result of a Vice very natural to mankind The immoderate Ambition of knowledge extends it self beyond nature, even so far as to enquire into what is most mysterious in its Author, not so much out of a design to adore him, as out of a vain curiosity of knowing all things. This vice is close attended by another: Curiosity breeds Presumption; and being as bold in defining, as indiscreet in inquiring, we erect, as it were, an infallible Science of those things which are to us altogether inconceivable. So depravedly do we use the will and understanding! we proudly aspire to know every thing, and cannot; we may religiously observe every thing, and will not. Let us be just, charitable, and patient, according to the principles of our Religion, and we shall know and observe at the same time

I leave it to our Doctors to refute the errors of the Calvinists, 'tis enough for me to be persuaded that our opinions are the sounder But if rightly apprehended, I dare say the Spirit of both Religions is differently grounded on good Principles, only one extends farther the exercise of Good Works, with the other, the cautions to avoid Evil, are more exact The Catholick with an active resolution, and loving industry, is perpetually seeking some new way of pleasing God. The Reformed, stinted by circumspection and respect, dares not venture beyond a known precept, for fear by imagin'd novelties, of giving too much sway to his fancy.

To be always disputing points of Doctrine, is not the means to reunite us Arguments being inexhaustible, the Controversy will last as long as there are men to manage it. But if we would leave these Disputes,

that only serve to exasperate us, and return without passion to that particular Spirit which distinguishes us it will not be impossible to find a general one in which we may agree

Let us Catholicks bridle the restless Zeal, that makes us act a little too much of our own heads Let the Reformed shake off their unactive regularity, and animate their langour, without departing from their submission to Providence Let us retrench something in condescension to them, and let them admit something more in complaisance to us Then, without thinking either of *Free will* or *Predestination*, we shall frame insensibly a true rule for our actions, which will be follow'd by that of our opinions

If we come to a reconciliation of wills upon the good conduct of Life, it will soon produce a good understanding in Doctrine Let us but join in Good Works, and we shall not long be of separate Faiths

I conclude from this short Discourse, that it is an ill method of converting men, to attack them by affronting their Judgments A man defends his notions either as true, or as his own, and however it be, he raises a hundred objections against the person that wou'd convince him Nature has given to every one his proper sense and seems to have engag'd him to it by a secret fond indulgence He can submit to the will of another, tho' he be free he can own himself inferiour in Courage and Virtue, but he is asham'd to confess a submission to another man's Sense his most natural reluctance is to acknowledge a superiority of Reason in any one whomsoever

Our chief advantage is to be born reasonable our greatest jealousy is to find that others pretend to be so, more than our selves If we consult the Conversions of antient times, we shall find that the Souls were mov'd but the Understandings very little convinc'd The first disposition to receive the truths of Christianity is form'd in the Heart In things

purely natural, 'tis the mind's part to conceive, and its knowledge goes before the affection for the objects: in things supernatural, the Soul is taken, it is affected, it adheres, and unites it self, without ever comprehending them.

Heaven has better prepar'd our Hearts for the impressions of God's Grace, than our Understandings for Illumination His immensity confounds our narrow Intellects: his bounty agrees better with our Love. There is I know not what within us, that secretly pleads for a GOD, whom we cannot comprehend, and hence it is, that to succeed in the Conversion of men, we must settle a pleasing commerce with them, by means of which we may inspire them with the same movements: for in disputes of Religion, the mind in vain strains it self to make us see what we see not, but in a sweet and pious familiarity, it is easy for the Soul to infuse Sentiments

To consider well the Christian Religion, wou'd make one think, that God had depriv'd it of the light of our Minds, that it might turn more upon the motions of our Hearts. *To love God and our Neighbour* includes all, says *St. Paul* And what is this, but to require a disposition of Heart as well towards God as Man? It is properly to oblige us to do out of a principle of Love, what the Civil Government enjoins by rigorous Laws, and Morality prescribes by a severe order of Reason

Charity makes us relieve and succour, while Justice forbids us to do wrong The latter with difficulty hinders opposition, the other with pleasure, procures relief. Those who have the true sentiments that our Religion inspires, can't be unfaithful to a Friend, or ungrateful to a Benefactor. With these good sentiments, a Heart innocently loves those objects God has made amiable, and the most innocent part of our Loves is the most charming and tender

Let gross and sensual persons complain of our

Religion for the constraint it lays upon them, yet the nice and refined will commend it for sparing them disgusts and repentance More skilful than voluptuous Philosophy in the science of Pleasures, and wiser than severe Philosophy in point of Morality it refines our taste to Delicacy and our sentiments to Innocence Look upon man in a civil Society, if Justice be necessary, yet 'tis a restraint to him In the pure state of Nature, his Liberty will have something of barbarity in it, and if he govern himself by Morality, his Reason is austere All other Religions stir up in the mind tempestuous thoughts, and troublesome Passions They raise against nature superstitious fears, or a furious zeal, sometimes to the sacrificing our Children, like *Agamemnon*, at other times to the devoting our selves, like *Decius* Only the Christian Religion composes all our Inquietudes, softens all our Fierceness, sets all our tender Movements a going, not only for our friends and neighbours, but for the indifferent, and even for our enemies

This is the end of the Christian Religion, and this was once the practice of it If it be otherwise now, it is because we have let it lose its influence on our hearts and given way to the encroachments of our imaginations upon it Hence springs the division of our minds about Faith instead of the union of our wills in Good Works, insomuch, that what ought to be a band of Charity betwixt men, is now become the subject of their Quarrels, Jealousies and ill nature

From this diversity of Opinions has arisen that of Parties, and the adherence to Parties has caus'd Persecutions and Wars Many thousands have died in disputing about the manner of receiving what, 'twas agreed on all hands, they did receive in the Sacrament Tis a mischief that still continues and will last till Religion quits the curiosity of our minds for the tenderness of our hearts and disgusted with

the foolish presumption of our Inquiries, returns to the sweet motions of our Love.

LETTER 41. [Works, 1728 II 53] Of this long and interesting letter,[1] Des Maizeaux says "Of all the Works of Saint Evremond, there is none in which he has painted himself more to the life than in this It shews him at one view, a Courtier, a Man of Letters, a Philosopher, a Divine, and discovers a fine Genius, a delicate Taste, and a nice Discernment"

42

TO MADAME DE KÉROUALLE [1]

A PROBLEM

IN IMITATION OF THE SPANIARDS

[1671]

I know not which of the two is more injurious to the happiness of the Fair-Sex. "Either to abandon

[1] Louise Renée de Penencovet de Kéroualle waited upon Charles II's sister, the Duchess of Orleans, when she came to England in 1670 After the Duchess's death, the Duke of Buckingham succeeded in his design of creating her lady-in-waiting, *maîtresse-en-titre* to the King in the place of the Duchess of Cleveland whom he (Buckingham) detested Created Duchess of Portsmouth in 1671 and of d'Aubigny in 1674, Louise de Kéroualle played a sinister part in the politics of her naturalized country through the medium of the King's affections, and all but succeeded in selling England to Louis XIV As the subject of innumerable venomous and coarse satires during her own lifetime, and of as many popular biographies since, she is too well known for further comment Saint Evremond's letter must have been written soon after her arrival in England, when she was still Evelyn's "baby-faced" girl, and before she was created Duchess For all his skill in the delicate art of irony, he could not have foreseen the irony of the Problem he had set out to solve, for few women have indulged themselves more completely than Mme Kéroualle did, and few passions Antony's for Cleopatra suggests itself have been attended with greater misfortunes than hers, though the irony of course is that she brought them, not upon herself, but upon this country

themselves wholly to their Inclinations, or strictly to follow the dictates of Virtue, and whether the indulging their Passions be attended with more Misfortunes, than they are depriv'd of Pleasures by the constraint they lay on themselves" I have met with amorous Ladies lamenting themselves for the contempt they were fallen into I have seen Prudes groaning under the severities of Virtue, and who endeavour'd by sighs to ease their swelling Heart of the secret torment they endur'd, by not daring to indulge their Passion in short as I have seen the one regret the Reputation they had lost, so have I seen others wish for the Pleasures they durst not enjoy Happy is the Woman, who knows how to behave herself discreetly, without curbing her Inclinations! for as it is a disgrace for one of her Sex to abandon herself to Love, without any regard to her Fame, 'tis on the other side, a great mortification to pass her life without an Amour

To avoid this last misfortune, you will do well to follow an Advice, which I design to give you without any by end Do not too severely reject Temptations, which in this Country offer themselves with more modesty than is required even in a Virgin, to hearken to them You may perhaps, be so vain, as to be pleas'd with no one but your self but you'll be soon tired with being pleas'd and lov'd by no body else, and whatever complacency Self love may afford, you will stand in need of another's Love for your real satisfaction and entertainment Yield therefore to the sweets of Temptations, instead of consulting your Pride The latter would soon persuade you to return to France and France as 'tis the fate of many others, would throw you into a Nunnery but tho' your own free choice should lead you to that melancholy place of retirement, you ought however, to have made your self worthy of entering it before-hand What figure will you make there if you want the Character of a Penitent? The true Penitent afflicts and mortifies

herself on the remembrance of her Faults: but what can a harmless innocent Maiden repent of? You will appear ridiculous to the other Nuns, who have just reason to repent, for repenting only out of mere grimace.

Another inconveniency which you will not fail to meet with, is, that instead of carrying to the Convent a disgust for Love, the very Convent will suggest to you the thoughts of it. That holy Place turns Love into Devotion, when one has had no experience of this Passion. In such a case, all the fervency of your Zeal being converted into Love, you will in vain sigh for its Pleasures, and in the difficulty of enjoying them, you will, for your own torment, perpetually represent to your self, how easy it was for you to come at them in the world. Thus you will either be consumed with Regrets, or devour'd by Wishes, according as your mind turns either to the remembrance of what you might have done, or to the thought of what you can do no more.

But what you'll find most strange in a Nunnery is, that your Reason will contribute as much as your Passion to make you unhappy. The more knowledge you have, the more you will suffer by the imbecillity and ignorance of an old Abbess, and the light of your understanding will only serve to excite murmurings in your heart Under a mortify'd Countenance you will harbour rebellious thoughts, and obeying orders which you cannot either sincerely submit to, or openly oppose, you will linger out uncomfortable days in repining at your Condition, with the outward grimace of a Sham-Penitent A melancholy Life this, dear Sister, to be oblig'd, for custom-sake, to mourn for a Sin one has not committed, at the very time one begins to have a desire to commit it!

This is the miserable condition of harmless Virgins, who carry their innocence to a Nunnery! They are unhappy in it, for not having laid a good foundation

for their Repentance a foundation so necessary to religious Houses, that of mere pity we shall be oblig'd to send you to Epsom, Tunbridge, or the Bath,[1] that you may, if possible, have some small occasion for Penance

Whether as I wish, you remain in the World, or as I fear, you retreat out of it it is your interest to adjust and agree two things, that seem incompatible, but are not so I mean *Love* and *Discretion* You may, perhaps have been told, that 'tis better not to love at all, than to love with such a constraint, but the rule of this discretion has nothing austere in it since it only requires the loving but one Person at one time That Lady who loves many abandons herself and of this kind of good, as of all others, the use is commendable, and the profusion dishonourable

LETTER 42 [Works 1728 II 91]

43

TO THE COMTE D'OLONNE

[1674]

As soon as I heard of your disgrace I did my self the honour to write to you, to assure you how much I was concern d at it and the business of this Letter is to let you know, that we ought at least to avoid that troublesome companion Melancholy at a time when it is not in our power to relish Joy If there be any polite Gentlemen where you are, their Conversation may make some amends for that which you have lost

[1] These were the fashionable watering places frequented by Charles II s court for an account of which see for instance Shadwell s comedy Epsom Wells Lord Rochester s satire Tunbridge Wells and the anonymous Bath Intrigues the last two printed in Poems on Affairs of State

But if you find none there, Books and good Cheer may help to supply that defect, and afford you no ordinary Consolation. I talk to you like a Master who is able to give Lessons; not that I presume upon the superiority of understanding: but I fancy I have some right to assume an authority over persons that are novices in Disgrace, by the long experience I have had of Misfortunes, and unlucky Accidents.

Amongst the Books you are to chuse for your entertainment in the Country, apply your self principally to those that strike in with your humour, rather than those that pretend to fortify your mind by Arguments and Reasonings. The latter engage and combat the evil, which is always done at the expence of the Person, in whom this conflict happens; the first make it to be forgotten, and it is no hard matter to make joy succeed to obliterated grief.

Morality is only proper to form methodically a good Conscience; and I have seen several grave and composed men come out of its school, whose awkward Prudence made them ridiculous Men of true honour and good breeding need none of these Lectures; for as they know what's good purely by the exactness of their taste, so they are disposed to it by their own motion. Not but that there are certain occasions, where its assistance is not to be rejected, but where we want its aid, we should be glad to have none of these occasions.

If you were reduc'd to the necessity of having your veins open'd, and bleeding to death, I would allow you to read *Seneca*, and to imitate him: tho' I would rather chuse the indifference of *Petronius*, than an affected forc'd constancy, which is not attain'd without great difficulty.

If you were of a humour to devote your self for your Country, I would advise you to read nothing but the Lives of those old Romans, who courted a glorious Death for the good of their Nation: but considering

your present circumstances, I think you lie under an obligation to live for your self and to spend the remainder of your Life as agreeably as you can Now this being your case, leave off all study of Wisdom which will contribute neither to the lessening of your Troubles, nor to the regaining of your Pleasures You may seek for constancy in *Seneca* but will find nothing in him but severity *Plutarch* will be less troublesome, however he will make you grave and serious rather than sedate *Montaigne* will bring you acquainted with human Nature better than any other, but then 'tis human Nature with all its weaknesses a knowledge useful indeed in Prosperity to teach moderation, but sad and afflicting in adverse Fortune

Let not the unhappy, therefore, learn from Books to be disturb'd at our miseries, but to laugh at our follies for which reason you will prefer the reading of *Lucian Petronius* and *Don Quixot*, before that of *Seneca, Plutarch*, and *Montaigne* I recommend to you *Don Quixot* above all let your affliction be what it will, the delicacy of his ridicule will insensibly make you relish mirth

You'll tell me perhaps, that I was not of so gay a humour in my own Misfortunes, as I appear to be in yours, and that it is ill breeding in a man to bestow all his concern upon his own Misfortunes, and be indifferent to, nay, and even merry with the Calamities of his Friends I should agree with you in that, if I behaved my self so but I can honestly affirm to you, that I am little less concerned at your Exile than your self, and the little mirth which I advise you to, is in order to have a share of it my self, when I shall find you capable of receiving it

As for what relates to my own Misfortunes if I have formerly appear'd to you more afflicted under them than I seem to be at present it is not because I was so indeed I was of opinion that disgraces exacted from us the decorum of a melancholy Air,

and that this apparent Mortification was a respect due to the will of our Superiors, who seldom bethink themselves of punishing us, without a design to afflict us. But then you are to know, that under a sad outside and mortified countenance, I gave my self all the satisfaction I could find in my self, and all the pleasure I could take in the conversation of my Friends

After having found the vanity of that grave temper we learn from Morality, I should grow ridiculous my self, if I continued so serious a discourse, which makes me proceed to give you some Advice that shall be less troublesome than Instructions.

Adapt, as much as possibly you can, your palate and appetite to your health, 'tis a great secret to be able to reconcile the agreeable and necessary in two things, which have been almost always opposite. Yet after all, to arrive at this great mystery, we want nothing but Sobriety and Niceness, and what ought not a man to do, that he may learn to chuse those delicious dishes at his Meals, which will keep both his Mind and Body in a good disposition all the remainder of the day? A man may be sober without being nice, but he can never be nice without being sober Happy is the person that enjoys both these qualities together! for thus his Pleasure is even inseparable from his Diet.

Spare no cost to get Champagne Wines, tho' you were two hundred Leagues from Paris [1] Those of

[1] At Villers-Cotterets, an easy ride from Rheims and Epernay, d'Olonne can have experienced no difficulty in getting Champagne, the wine which Saint Evremond loved and praised above all others His slighting reference to the wines of Burgundy is not altogether unprejudiced Indeed the popularity of Burgundy in England may be said to date from the Restoration, one of the earliest mentions of it occurring in a play of Wycherley's Saint Evremond shared the opinion of Fontenelle who said that a glass of Champagne was worth a whole bottle of Burgundy In France, at this period, an absurd quarrel had arisen over the respective

Burgundy have lost all their credit with the men of good taste, and scarce do they preserve a small remainder of their old Reputation with the Citizens There is no Province that affords excellent Wines for all Seasons, but Champagne It furnishes us with the Wines of Ay, of Avenet, and of Auvile till the Spring, Tessy, Sillery, and Versenai, for the rest of the year [1]

If you ask me which of all these Wines I prefer, without being sway'd by the fashion of Tastes, which false pretenders to delicacy have introduc d I will tell you that the Wine of Ay is the most natural of all Wines the most wholesome, the most free from all smell of the soil, and of the most exquisite agreeableness, in regard to its Peach taste which is peculiar to it, and is in my opinion, the chief of all Tastes and Flavours [2] *Leo X Charles V Francis I* and *Henry VIII* had each of them their Houses in or near Ay, in order to the more curious getting their quanti ties of Wines Amongst the greatest affairs of the world in which those Princes were more or less concern'd, it was not the least of their cares to have the Wine of Ay in their Cellars

merits of the two wines and the effects they were likely to have on the King s health Cf Letter 128 (1700) The Wines of Burgundy have got such an ascendant notwith standing all I have said and written concerning the Wines of Champagne that I dare not name them any more

[1] These vignobles in the commune of Vertus are productive to this day The spelling in the text is rather erratic and as far as I can see phonetic though I am prepared to stand corrected by such authorities as Mr Morton Shand and Mr Warner Allen *Ay* is correct *Avenet* I think should be *Ambonnay* *Auvile* is clearly *Hautvillers* *Tessy* I think should be *Dizy* *Sillery* is correct *Versenai* is now spelt with a final *y*

The wines of Ay were commended by Pope Urban II as the best in the world and were formerly used at Rheims for the coronation ceremonies of the Kings of France Henry IV whom Saint Evremond overlooks in his list of Royal

Be not too desirous of Rarities, but be nice in your choice of what may be had with convenience A good wholesome natural Soup, which is neither too weak nor too strong, is to be preferred for common Diet before all others, as well for the exquisiteness of its Taste, as for the advantage of its Use Tender juicy Mutton, good sucking Veal, white and curious barn-door Fowls, well fed, but not cramm'd, fat Quail taken in the Country; Pheasant, Partridge, and Rabbit, all which have an agreeable natural flavour in their Taste, are the true Meats which may help to furnish your table all the seasons of the year. The Wood-hen is particularly to be esteem'd for excellency, but is not to be sought after where you or I are, by reason of its great rarity.

If an indispensible necessity obliges you to dine with some of your Neighbours, whom either their money or their dexterity hath excused from serving in the Rear-ban,[1] commend the Hare, the Stag, the Roe-buck, the Wild-boar, but eat none of them: let even Ducks and Teal have your good word too. Of all brown Meats the Snipe alone is to be commended, in

Patrons, used to call himself "Roi d'Ay" In recommending Champagne, Saint Evremond, a conservative in his tastes as well as in his opinions, was almost certainly referring to the still wine which was made up to the end of the seventeenth century, when a certain Dom Perignon, keeper of the cellars in the Benedictine monastery of Hautvillers, is said to have discovered, or rather to have given it its sparkling properties Mr Morton Shand ["A Book of French wines", 1928] suggests that Saint Evremond may have introduced sparkling Champagne to Charles II's Court Personally I am convinced that in this letter he was recommending d'Olonne to drink the wine which so many royal and noble connoisseurs had kept in their cellars, and not Pérignon's new-fangled concoction

[1] In France, at this time, only the Nobility did military service The "Ban" was a convocation by the King of his vassals, the "Arriere-ban", or *Rear-ban*, as Des Maizeaux has it, was a convocation by the great nobles of the smaller nobility

favour of its taste, tho' it is somewhat prejudicial to Health

Look upon all mixtures and kitchin compositions, call'd *Ragous*, or *Kick shaws*,[1] to be little better than Poison If you eat but little of them they will do you but little hurt, if you eat a great deal, it's impossible but their Pepper, Vinegar, and Onions must ruin your taste at last, and soon cause an alteration in your Health

Sauces if you make them your self as simple and plain as is possible, can do no harm at all Salt and Orange are the most general, and most natural Seasoning Fine Herbs are wholesomer, and have something in them more exquisite than Spices, but they are not equally proper for every thing One must use them with judgment in Meats where they are most agreeable, and distribute them with so much discretion that they may improve the proper taste of the Meat, without making their own discern'd

Having thus discoursed to you of the quality of Wines and the properties of Meats, 'tis necessary to come to the most proper counsel for the adapting of the Palate to the Body

Let Nature incite you to eat and drink by a secret disposition which is lightly perceiv'd, and doth not press you to it thro' necessity Without appetite the most wholesome Food is capable of hurting and the most agreeable of disgusting us With hunger, the necessity of eating is a sort of Evil which causes another after the Meal is over, by making us eat more than we should The Appetite (vulgarly call'd a *good Stomach*) prepares if I may so speak an exercise for our heat in the digestion whereas greediness prepares labour and pain for it The way to keep us always

[1] The French text reads *Ragouts ou Hors d'Œuvres* Kick shaws is the anglicized form of the French Quelques choses and was in common use after the Restoration to describe a made up dish

in a good temper, is to suffer neither too much emptiness, nor too much repletion; that so Nature may never be tempted to fill it self greedily with what it wants, nor impatient to discharge its load.

This is all that my Experience has been able to furnish me with, in relation to Reading and good Cheer. Before I conclude, I will add a word or two concerning Love

If you have a Mistress at Paris, forget her as soon as ever you can, for she will not fail to change, and it is good to be beforehand with the unfaithful A Person amiable at Court, aims at being belov'd there, and where she is loved, she loves at last. The Ladies that preserve a Passion for absent persons, raise but little in those that see them, and the continuation of their Love to the absent, is less an honour to their Constancy, than a scandal to their Beauty Thus, Sir, whether your Mistress loves another, or whether she loves you still, good sense ought to make you leave her either as deceitful or as contemned. Nevertheless, in case you foresee an end of your Disgrace, you ought not to put an end to your Love, a short absence excites Passions, whereas a long one extinguishes them.

What way soever your mind turns, give not a new weight to it by too much Seriousness Disgrace is but too heavy of it self Practise in your Exile, what *Petronius* did at his Death · *Amove res serias quibus gravitas & constantiae gloria peti solet; tibi, ut illi, levia carmina & faciles versus* [1]

There are some, whose Misfortunes have render'd them devout by a certain Compassion, a secret Pity,

[1] Cf Tacitus, Ann XVI 19 "Forte illis diebus Campaniam petiverat Caesar [Nero], et Cumas usque progressus Petronius illic attinebatur, nec tulit ultra timoris aut spei moras alloqui amicos, non per seria aut quibus gloriam constantiae peteret Audiebatque referentes nihil de immortalitate animae et sapientium placitis, sed levia carmina et faciles versus"

which a man is apt to entertain for himself, proper enough to dispose men to a more religious Life My Disgraces never gave me this sort of compassion Nor has Nature made me sensible enough of my own misfortunes The loss of my Friends might be able to excite in me those tender sorrows and nice afflictions, out of which Devotion is form'd in process of time I would not advise any one to resist that Devotion which springs from compassion nor that which gives us an assurance The one agreeably affects the Soul, the other settles the Mind in a sweet repose but all men and particularly the unfortunate, ought to defend themselves with care from a superstitious Devotion, which would mix its black melancholy vapours with those of Disgrace

LETTER 43 [Works 1728 II 94] Des Maizeaux relates the circumstances which suggested this delightful piece of advice on the pleasures to which an exile should apply himself The Comte d'Olonne M de Vineuil and the Abbe d'Effiat and two or three more were banish'd the Court of France in 1674 for having talked too freely of the King As soon as Saint Evremond had notice of the Disgrace of the Comte d'Olonne he wrote to acquaint him with his deep concern at it and being afterwards informed that he was permitted to leave Orleans where he was at first confined and to retire to his Country Seat of Montmirel near Villers Cotterets he sent him a second Letter

44

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART

London December 1st [1674]

If you knew the pleasure that your letters give me, either you are wanting in friendship or I should receive them more often than I do That long sojourn in the country of which you spoke, seems to me an excuse for your laziness rather than a proper explanation of your silence Nevertheless I am content,

without troubling to enquire whether it is a true feeling of friendship that prompts you to write, or the illusion of it which the memory of our former commerce has created Having ended this little speech, I must tell you bluntly that I never intended to criticize the work of Monsieur *Despréaux*,[1] and do not intend, as long as I live, to judge any work whatsoever, without conforming to the rule of never divulging my opinion of it to my friends, for there's a limit to discretion, and I'm not at all disposed to make a burden of a thing that all the world enjoys with perfect freedom I'll give you in confidence my opinion of this book [2] by Monsieur *Despréaux*, a man I esteem highly although I am not acquainted with him In many places it contains the finest lines I have

[1] Saint Evremond's relations with the great satirist, Boileau Despréaux, were marred by a lack of sympathy on the latter's part Saint Evremond, in spite of the bitter treatment he received from Boileau, never allowed personal animosity to diminish the very high opinion he had of his genius The fact of the matter is that Boileau did not, indeed would not, tolerate Saint Evremond's scepticism

To understand the point of Saint Evremond's remarks in this letter it is necessary to refer to an unfortunate incident that had occurred in 1665 In that year (not in 1666 as M Chaponiere maintains) five of Boileau's satires and his "Discours au Roi" had been printed together with an anonymous piece of prose, entitled "Jugement en prose sur les Sciences où un honnête homme peut s'occuper", written by Saint Evremond, but printed, without his consent, in a garbled text In the following year Boileau referred to "that monstruous edition" in a preface to the first genuine edition of his Satires, and, without mentioning Saint Evremond's name, referred to his essay as a "Thin and insipid piece of prose which all the Salt of my Verses cannot season" [*v* Œuvres de Boileau 4 vols La Haye, 1722 Vol IV, pp 207–8, where Boileau's preface to the 1666 edition is printed in full]

[2] Saint Evremond is evidently referring to the 1674 quarto edition of Boileau's works in which his translations of Horace's "Art of Poetry" and "Longinus on the Sublime" appeared for the first time

ever seen It is evident throughout that the author has discovered the art of composing and arranging them as well as any one of the Age, his style, though beneath that of *Horace*, is very fine all the same, and his translation of *Longinus* is extremely pleasing to my mind In short, I think the public is much obliged to him, and I have a share in this obligation for the pleasure he gives me and the profit I derive from it In truth there is a sense of ridicule somewhat more refined even than his, *La raison dit Virgile et la rime Quinault, L Abbe de Pure*,[1] and a hundred other things in that vein allow one to conceive something more delicate, it is the vein of *Quevedo* [2] and of a *Portuguese* before him, when they treat of the inevitableness of rhyme, which *Cervantes* I think would not have

[1] Saint Evremond is quoting here from Boileau s Second Satire lines 17–20

> Si je veux d un Galant depeindre la figure
> Ma plume pour rimer trouve l Abbe de Pure
> Si je pense exprimer un Auteur sans defaut
> La Raison dit Virgile et la Rime Quinault

(If I wish to describe a Wit my pen to find a rhyme insists on the Abbe de Pure [who was a celebrated bore] and if I want to name a faultless writer my judgement cries *Virgil* but the rhyme *Quinault* [a writer of tragedies to whom Boileau was grossly unfair]) The subject of this satire which was addressed to Moliere was the difficulty of finding a rhyme and making it fit the sense Voltaire had the same opinion of these lines as Saint Evremond Quoting them in his Siecle de Louis XIV he says they are unworthy the attentions of men of taste

Francisco Quevedo the Spanish poet (1580–1645) of whom Saint Evremond says [*v* Letter 41] Quevedo indeed appears a very ingenious Author but I esteem him more for his thought of burning all his own Books when he read Don Quixote than for having been able to compose em Saint Evremond was a passionate admirer of Cervantes Don Quixote which he says I could read all my life without being disgusted one single moment Nothing in my opinion can contribute more to the forming in us a true taste of every thing

approved. It seems to me that Monsieur *Despréaux* wanted to appropriate the style of *Horace*, and has turned out to be a very exact and elegant *Juvenal*, doubtless the best of the kind we have, though *Régnier* [1] was less affected. I could wish there were more writers like him; I should take more pleasure in reading your letters than I do. The Works of Father *Rapin* [2] give me much satisfaction, while those of Monsieur *Arnauld* and Monsieur *Claude* are admirable. I beseech you to send me their new works, not forgetting Monsieur *Corneille's Suréna* [3]; my impatience, you know, is not content to receive them by the post. Burn this letter, for it is written for you alone.

LETTER 44 [*v* note, Letter 28]

45

TO MONSIEUR D'HERVART

The 4th of February [1674/5]

Since you ask me before everything else, for news of my health,[4] it is right to begin by telling you that

[1] Mathurin Régnier (1573–1613), one of the earliest French satirical poets. By saying that Régnier was less affected than Boileau, Saint Evremond is probably referring to the free and easy sweep of his verse compared to the impeccably regular and perfect elegance of Boileau's.

[2] Le Père René Rapin (1621–1687), author of Latin verses and "Reflections on Aristotle's Poetics (1672)", must not be confused with his namesake Nicolas Rapin, the satirist, a contemporary of Régnier's. René Rapin still holds an honourable place in the history of literary criticism. As a "Good Sense" man, who was opposed to the widely held doctrine of 'Furor Poeticus', to quote Professor Saintsbury, he was certain to find a sympathetic reader in Saint Evremond.

[3] "Suréna", Corneille's last tragedy, damned by Voltaire as "a ridiculous composition", was produced in 1674 and attracted little attention.

[4] The wound, which Saint Evremond had received in his knee at the battle of Nordlingen (1645), opened soon after

it allows me a tolerably easy sleep by night, and gives me a pretty good appetite during the day, but it does not always save me from the vapours, and yesterday evening, in fact, I was extremely troubled with them My mind, I think, is not affected by them at all, is neither too depressed nor too restless, and I am livelier than old age and misfortune should allow For the rest I do not precipitate in a country that is much given to precipitating, and during the fourteen years I have been in England I have not witnessed either a chemical operation or experiment

You need have no fear of wearying me with the subject of the Opera,[1] for whether I consider the interest of the subject itself, or your comments thereon, 'tis certain that no one could be more successful than you have been—which I am all the readier to admit since your views have always been mine I do not deny but that the music may be very beautiful in some places, and the dances marvellous, but that opera seeing how it is composed, should be perfect in every part, is an impossibility The Duke of *Buckingham* says he will support it as long as they sing *Hola, Ho &c ! Captain of the Guard, Summon Monsieur So and So !* The best part of the action in Comedy and Tragedy is expressed by lyrics or by recitative, and for this reason there is nothing so ridiculous as having an action sung whether it be the deliberation of a Council the giving of orders in battle or any thing else you like Where the Gods are concerned there may be singing every Nation has worshipped them in song and chanted their

his arrival in England but says Des Maizeaux it was so well looked after that he felt no inconvenience from it only that his left Leg was somewhat weaker than the other

[2] Saint Evremond was deeply interested in music and its relation to the stage, at a time when the Opera was passing through a brilliant infancy in London and Paris [*v* his Letter (No 55) to the Duke of Buckingham On Operas and notes to same]

praises. We can sing what we feel and suffer, for grief and affection are naturally expressed by a kind of tender and melancholy song But our actions require no other expression but the spoken word. Moreover, Operas are so contrived that all the spirit of the production is lost in our enjoyment of the music, which is not worth it, however enchanting it may be. For where the mind has too little to do, it is impossible, in the long run, that our senses, which we are most eager to please, should not begin to languish The best poet is obliged to degrade himself in favour of the musician, since his lines must be arranged, less for the meaning he would have them represent, than for the convenience of the musician and the smoothness of his songs Put *Baptiste's* music [1] and his dances in between the acts of *Surena* and *Iphigenia*,[2] and I'll willingly sacrifice my head if that does not create a distaste for Opera. I once heard a remark of *Corneille's*, to the effect that we should not only forget the meaning of an act, but also be less ready to understand the following, that the words of a song should, however, comment on what has gone before, and be, so to speak, an expression of the spirit of each act In this way it would resemble the Greek Chorus, and bring ideas together instead of scattering them. Shew this to no one; I have just written it with scarcely a lift of the pen Whether good or bad, it was suggested by your remarks, it is good, indeed, whenever it is in sympathy with your ideas.

LETTER 45 [*v* note, Letter 28]

[1] i e Jean-Baptiste Lulli, the composer and musician to the Court of Louis XIV (1633–1687), who was commonly referred to by his christian name, and appears as Baptiste in Saint Evremond's comedy "Les Operas"

[2] Racine's "Iphigénie en Aulide", produced August 18, 1674.

46

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1676]

I read just now, with Monsieur *Van Beuninghen*, the Copy of Verses [1] you did me the honour to send me That Ambassador, who has pass'd his life in study, as well as in the management of affairs, thinks them very fine, and for my own part, I am of opinion, that there are in that little piece some verses of as high and noble strain as I have seen this good while, in our language What makes me value them the more, is, because there's Novelty and good Sense, which are not easily match'd For our Novelties have often a cast of extravagance, and the good Sense which is often found in our Writings, is generally borrow'd from Antiquity, rather than of our own growth I would have the Moderns inspired by the wit of the Ancients but would not have them steal it, and pass it for their own I allow 'em to teach us how to think well, but hate to make use of their Thoughts What remains of their Works had the advantage of Novelty when they wrote it, whereas, what we borrow from them now, is grown obsolete by length of time and is dropt, as it were dead and extinguish'd into the brain of our Authors

What have we to do with a new Author who puts forth nothing but old Productions, who sets himself out with the fancies of the Greeks and imposes on the world their Knowledge for his own? A vast number of Rules made three thousand years ago are set up to be the Standard of what's writing now a

[1] Van Beuninghen the Dutch Ambassador [*v* note Letter 17] The Duc de Nevers (1641–1707) brother to the Duchesse Mazarin was the author of the verses mentioned by Saint Evremond [For an account of this witty nobleman *v* Memoires de M de Coulanges Paris 1820]

days; without considering that neither the Subjects to be treated, nor the Genius to be regulated are the same.

If we should make Love like *Anacreon* and *Sappho*, nothing would be more ridiculous, if like *Terence*, nothing more Plebeian, or Citizen-like; and if like *Lucian*, nothing more gross and lewd. All ages have a peculiar character proper to themselves: they have their Politicks, their Interests, their Affairs; and, in some measure, their Morals, having their particular Virtues and Vices I own 'tis all Humanity still: but Nature is various in men, and Art, which is nothing but an imitation of Nature, ought to vary as she does. Our impertinences are not the same which *Horace* ridicul'd, nor are our vices the same which *Juvenal* rebuk'd we must therefore make use of other raillery and reproofs.

I am oblig'd to the Duc *de Nevers*: for I have a long while been looking for Novelty, and he has brought it in my way I find in him one who thinks himself what he writes, and gives his own turn to his expressions.

> *'Tis I who in my Verses wrote by Chance,*
> *Have us'd no other Rule but Confidence,*
> *Nor shew'd no other Art, but Manly Sense* [1]

If *Chance*, *Boldness*, and *Good-sense* produce so many Beauties, I advise Poets to lay aside all Rules of Art, and to give a loose to their natural Genius

> *T' afford the French new Ornaments and Dress,*
> *I've ventured at bold Figures in my Verse* [1]

He who ventures upon such *bold Figures*, is suie to have none but noble ones. 'tis a happy boldness,

[1] These lines and those that occur later in this letter are not translated by Des Maizeaux I have used the versions printed in an anonymous translation of "The Posthumous Works of M de St Evremond, Vol III London Printed by J B for Jeffery Wale, 1705"

which has nothing extravagant or false in it, it is a flash of imagination which judgment may own for one of its lights

I know not whether the advantages which the Duc *de Nevers* ascribes to Madame *de la Fayette*,[1] and to Monsieur *de Mere* [1] are sincere Their merit persuades they are so otherwise I should suspect the niceness of the turn, and be afraid that there might be a banter concealed under the *Sublime* of the one, and the *various Charms* of the other The Praise he gives to Monsieur *Bourdelot* [2] is more plainly express'd For my own part I should bestow no less on his Person, but I should take care that my commendations should not have so near a relation to his Profession In my opinion Physic kills more than it cures, and nothing less than your Brother's Poetry could restore the honour of a Science which that of *Molière* had run down [3] To be free with you I would retrench something from the skill of the Physician, to bestow more, if possible on the wit and knowledge of the Gentleman

I have more veneration for the Court of Rome than for the Faculty of Paris, and tho I have full liberty to speak of the Pope, in a Country where they burn him yearly I still say nothing of his Eulogy, save only that *St Peter* ought to be jealous of it for it is more easy to found a State than to reform it, to settle order in it than to restore it

The caution you shew whenever you speak of your

[1] Madame de la Fayette (1639–1692) authoress of one of the best sellers of the seventeenth century La Princesse de Cleves The Chevalier de Mere (1640–1685) a member of the libertine society which Saint Evremond frequented in his youth He was possessed of considerable wit and critical powers and his writings are said to have influenced Pascal
[2] The Abbe Bourdelot to whom the verses which Saint Evremond had been reading with Van Beuninghen were dedicated was physician in ordinary to Louis XIV
[3] *v* Moliere's comedy La Malade Imaginaire

Husband, makes me pass slightly over *Orgon*, and my discretion, founded on yours, takes away from me the idea of the Duc *Mazarin*. But a man who should *beat the price of his Salvation with money in hand*, would give me an ill opinion of the chapman that purchases Heaven, and still a worse of those that sell it.[1]

Let's return to the beauty of those Verses, which cannot be the same throughout. The elevation of the mind leaves some little things for exact Criticks to lay hold on, and it is a comfort which great Wits ought not to grudge those of a moderate size. Let poor wretches, to whom Nature has not been indulgent, put themselves as forward as they can by the labour of so crabbed a study. for my own part, I have run over with pleasure some places that transport me; and my Admiration leaves me no room for the spleen of Censure

[1] The strange conduct of the Duchess's husband, Armand de la Porte, Marquis de la Meilleraye (after his marriage Duc Mazarin), whom Saint Evremond compares to the loathsome Orgon in Molière's "Tartuffe", would make an excellent case-history for a psycho-analyst He was obsessed with jealousy, which took the form of his attempting to use legal authority to confine his wife to his palace, and to prevent her from witnessing, for example, the milking of a cow, for fear of putting obscene ideas into her head She fled from him and was pursued all over France and Italy by his emissaries The conclusion of the whole affair was the celebrated lawsuit in which Saint Evremond prepared an answer for the Duchesse Mazarin to the accusations of her husband's advocate, Monsieur Erard, which was printed in London in 1696 "An Answer to the Pleading of M Herard [*sic*], Advocate in the Grand Council, or rather to the Invective, or Libel, which the Duke of Mazarin caused to be printed against his Lady the Dutchess" [*v* Works, 1728 III 17, where it is printed with a new preface by Saint Evremond] The reader is recommended to read a full account of this disastrous marriage and its sequel in Works, 1728 III 105 "Memoirs of the Dutchess Mazarin" [By the Abbé Saint Réal] and in "The Vagabond Duchess", London, 1926

It s far easier to praise the King in prose than in verse Verses, with all the pomp of Poetry, fall short of the magnificence of the Subject, whereas in Prose a plain truth is a great Eulogy One needs but barely to relate what the King has done, to efface all that has been written of others The Duc *de Neuers* has undertaken a more difficult task he has endeavour'd to find out thoughts that might equal the atchievements of his Hero The design was bold, nor was he altogether unsuccessful in it for if he comes much short of the glory of him he commends he raises himself insensibly above the Genius of all those that have commended him

Immortal is his Glory who can draw
His Picture to the Life? With so much Awe
He looks that even Apelles Hand would shake
Were he the Features of his Face to take
O Bourdelot how happy is our Fate
To live when LOUIS *Reigns with such Majestick State!*
Let us his great unheard of Actions praise
And Trophies of them for our Children raise
For they (what pity 'tis!) will only read
What we now see and write with awful dread[1]

I should lament the condition of our descendants if my own were not more to be lamented They will live one day they will enter the world out of which I am upon the point of going and in which I am reduc d to read over the King s exploits, without being allow d to be an eye-witness of them any more than they 'Tis a great misfortune for a man to pass away his life at a distance from his Empire but then if Fortune had not banish d me from it, I should not have the happiness to live in yours You inspire Passion in every thing that is capable of it and Reason yields to you even those that are past any sense of passion

LETTER 46 [Works 1728 II 254]

[1] See Note p 164

47

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1676]

If you find any Extravagancies in the little Book I send you, you are oblig'd to excuse them, since you have robb'd me of my Judgment, which might have hinder'd me from committing them to writing. I have been honour'd in my time, with the company of very amiable Persons, to whom I am beholden for leaving me so much good sense as I had occasion for, to esteem their merit, without disturbing my repose: but I have just grounds to complain of you, for plundering me of all my Reason, which the others had left me.

How unhappy is my condition! I have lost every thing on the side of Reason, and I see nothing for me to pretend to on the side of Passion Shall I ask you to love a man of my age? I have not been so good a Christian as to expect miracles in my favour. If the merit of my Passion could obtain of you a concern for my being old, and a desire that I were young again, I should be content. The favour of a Wish is but a small matter, pray refuse me not that. It is natural to wish that every thing we love were amiable

There never was so disinterested a Passion in the world, as mine. I love those you love, nor do I love less those who love you, I consider your Lovers as your Subjects, instead of hating them as my Rivals: and that which is yours is dearer to me, than that which is against me is hateful to me. As for what relates to the Persons who are dear to you, I take no less a concern in them than you, my soul carries its movements and affections to the place where yours are; I relent when you grow tender, when you languish 'tis the same case with me. The passionate

Songs at the Opera make no impression upon me of themselves they have no manner of influence over me, but by that which they have over you I am touch'd to see you touch'd, and those melancholy Sighs, which, now and then steal unawares from you, put my heart to no less expence than they do yours

I have little or no share in causing any of your pains but I suffer from them as much as you do Sometimes you produce in us a Passion different from that which you design'd to excite If you repeat any Verses out of *Andromache* [1] you inspire Love with the sentiments of a Mother who would only stir up Pity You endeavour to make us sensible of her Misfortunes, and you soon see us sensible of your own Charms Sad and compassionate expressions revive secretly in our hearts the Passion which they have for you, and the grief which you would raise in us for an unfortunate Lady becomes a natural sense of our own torments

A man should not believe this without making experience of it, at his own cost Those matters that seem most opposite to tenderness, assume an affecting air in your mouth your Reasonings your Disputes, your Altercations, nay, your very Anger have their charms so difficult it is to find any thing in you, which does not contribute to the Passion you inspire Nothing comes from you which is not amiable, nothing is form'd in you which does not turn to love

A serious Reflection puts me in mind that you will laugh at me for this Discourse, but you cannot make merry with my weakness without being pleas'd with your Beauty and I am satisfied with my shame if it gives you any satisfaction A man may sacrifice his Repose, his Liberty and his Fortune but *Glory*

[1] This tragedy produced in 1667 put the seal to Racine's reputation Charles Perrault the author of the Fairy Tales says that it created almost as great a sensation as the production of Corneille's Cid

says *Montaigne, is never sacrificed.*[1] I will make bold to contradict *Montaigne* in this particular, and don't refuse to become ridiculous for the love of you

But upon second thoughts, Madam, we cannot make you a sacrifice of this nature. since a man can never be ridiculous in loving you. A Minister of State renounces his Politicks for you, and a Philosopher his Morals, without any prejudice to their reputation. The power of an exquisite Beauty justifies all the Passion which it is capable of producing; and after having consulted my Judgment as nicely as my Heart, I will tell you, without fearing to be ridicul'd for it, that *I love you.*

LETTER 47 [Works, 1728 II 236]

48

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[Nov. 1676]

I have resolv'd, Madam, to give you a piece of Advice, tho' I am not unsensible how little the Ladies care to receive any. But let the effect be what it will, I am too much concern'd for your Beauty, not to inform you, that you'll injure it extremely, if you should put on fine clothes on the Queen's birth-day.[2]

[1] *v* Montaigne, Essays Bk II 16 *passim*

[2] Catherine of Braganza's birthday was on November 15th In her otherwise drab and melancholy existence, this day was always made an excuse for great festivities at Court Evelyn mentions three of these anniversaries, the last of them, in 1684, being of unexampled magnificence, "with pageants of castles, forts, and other devices of girandolas, serpents, the King and Queen's arms and mottoes all represented in the fire" the last an ironic comment, seeing that Charles was probably going to spend the night with the Duchesse Mazarin The Court on this occasion, Evelyn remarks, "had not been seen so brave and rich in apparel since his Majesty's Restoration"

Let others of your sex make use of Ornaments these are artificial Beauties that serve them instead of the natural, and we are oblig'd to 'em for gratifying our eyes with something more agreeable than their own persons But should you follow their example, we should not have the same obligation to your Grace Every ornament that is bestow'd upon you, hides a charm, as every ornament that is taken from you, restores you some new grace, and you are never so lovely, as when we behold nothing in you but your self

The greatest part of the Ladies are very advantageously lost under their dress Some women look well enough with a pearl necklace, that would make a very sorry figure with their bare necks The richest necklace in the world, would have an ill effect upon you, it would make some alteration in your person, and every alteration that happens to a perfect Beauty, cannot be an advantage to it Those who keep your Jewels from you, are better friends to your beauty than you may imagine I am more your humble servant than any man, but as much your humble servant as I am, there are some days when I can find excuses for Messieurs *Colbert* and *du Metz*[1] Were you in the condition you ought to be in it would not be so easy to distinguish the advantages of your personal merit, from those of your fortune Those Gentlemen save us that trouble thanks to the care they have taken to separate those two things, we plainly see you are oblig'd to none but your self for all the tender sentiments men have for you Let others lay out all they are worth in Jewels and fine Clothes, Nature has been at all the expence and as you would be ungrateful, so we

[1] After her flight from France the Duchesse Mazarin had her jewels confiscated pending a lawsuit brought by her husband by Colbert Fouquet s successor at the Exchequer and du Metz Keeper of the Royal Treasury

should betray an ill taste, should we not be equally content with that profusion of gifts she has heap'd upon you.

I would counsel you, Madam, to take the same measures on her Majesty's Birth-day, which the famous *Bussi d'Amboise* [1] formerly observed at a Tournament Being inform'd before-hand that all the Noblemen of the Court design'd to put themselves to an extraordinary expence in their Equipage and Clothes, he order'd his Retinue to be dress'd like Lords, and appear'd himself in the plainest dress in the world, at the head of so rich a train The advantages of Nature were so conspicuous in the person of *Bussi*, that he alone was taken for a great Lord, and the other Noblemen, who rely'd so much upon the magnificence of their habits, pass'd but for Valets. Govern your self, I beseech you, Madam, by the example of *Bussi* : let *Fanchon* and *Gremer*,[2] be attir'd like Dutchesses , but as for your self, appear in the ordinary dress of a country Nymph, with nothing but the charms of your Beauty to recommend you : all the Ladies will be taken for *Fanchons*, and the plainness of your habit will not hinder you from out-shining all the Queens in the universe.

I have no great inclination to tell stories, which perhaps is nothing but the effect of an ill-grounded Vanity, that makes me prefer the expressing of what I imagine, to the reciting of what I have seen. The profession of a Story-teller fits but awkwardly upon young people, but is downright weakness in old men.

[1] Louis d'Amboise, Seigneur de Bussi (1549–1579?) [*v* Brantôme, " Vie des hommes illustres "] one of the leaders in the terrible massacre of the Protestants on Saint Bartholomew's Day 1572 He was renowned for his gallantry, and it was the discovery of his relations with the Comtesse de Montsoreau that led to his assassination by her husband's creatures before he was thirty years old

[2] " Two waiting-women of Madame Mazarin's " [Note of Des Maizeaux]



Th k lf l M se l t th ght h s b n
Th p s of e f d g *M*
Th Po t d h s Th m p ght of T m
F e Yo g e *y* y an e dl P m

Th P g f B ty by G G lle

When our mind is not arrived to its due vigour, or when it begins to decline, we then take a pleasure in telling what does not put us to any great expence of thought However, I will for once renounce the pleasure which I generally take in my own Imagination, to entertain you with a small Adventure, of which I was an eye-witness at the Hague

During my residence in that place the fancy took, one day, the Comte *de Guiche*,[1] and Monsieur *de la Vallière*, to draw the eyes of the spectators after them to put which noble design in execution, they both resolv'd that their Dress should have all the magnificence which this part of the world was able to afford, and at the same time, discover the nicety of their inventions The Count distinguish'd himself by a thousand singularities he had a tuft of feathers in his hat which was button'd up by a buckle of Diamonds, that he could have wish'd to have been larger, for this occasion He wore about his neck some Point de Venise which was neither a Cravat nor a Band but a small Ruff that might gratify the secret inclination he had contracted for the *Golilla*,[3] when he liv d at Madrid After this Madam, you would expect to find him in a Doublet, after the Spanish manner, but to your surprize, I must tell you, it was an Hungarian Vest Next the ghost of Antiquity haunted his memory, so he cover d his legs with Buskins but infinitely sprucer and genteeler than those the antient Romans used to wear, and on which he had order'd his Mistress's name to be written in letters that were extremely well design d, upon an embroidery of pearls From his Hat down to his Vest he had squar'd himself by the odd fancy

[1] Armand de Gramont Comte de Guiche [*v* note Letter 18]
[2] Monsieur de la Valliere was the brother of the celebrated Louise de la Baume Le Blanc Duchesse de la Valliere the favourite of Louis XIV
[3] i e the Collar of a Spanish Counsellor

of the Admirante of *Castile* [1], Comte *de Serini*,[2] was conspicuous in the Vest, and the idea of *Scipio* had made him put on Buskins. As for *la Vallière*, he had appareil'd himself after as extraordinary a manner as he possibly could, but he follow'd too much the French way, and could not raise himself to the perfection of fantasticalness

This was the equipage of our Gentlemen, when they made their appearance in the Voorhout,[3] which is the place where Persons of Quality use to take the air at the Hague. They had scarce enter'd it, when multitudes ran from all hands to gaze and stare at them; and as every body was surpriz'd at the novelty of the thing, they were at first puzzled, whether to admire it as extraordinary, or to laugh at it as extravagant. In this short uncertainty of thought, Monsieur *de Louvigny* [4] arriv'd in the place, and put a stop to their grave contemplation. He wore a plain black suit, and clean linnen made up the rest but then he had the finest head of hair, the most agreeable face, and the genteelest air that can be imagin'd. His modest deportment silently insinuated the merits of all his excellent Qualities: the Ladies were touch'd, and the Men were infinitely pleas'd. Were it not for you, Madam, the question would be soon decided, and the advantages of your

[1] The French text reads "*la bizarria* de l'Amirante" The Amirante, or rather Almirante, was Lord High Admiral of Spain

[2] The Comte de Serini, according to Loret in his "Muse historique" (Dec 20, 1664), was a Hungarian nobleman, who was killed in 1664, while hunting

[3] In "Les Délices des Pais-Bas" [à Brusselle, 1697, p 384] it is described as "one of the most beautiful Walks imaginable, formed by three Avenues of Lime-trees, that stretch as far as eye can reach, and bordered on one side by magnificent Palaces in which the Ambassadors do ordinarily reside"

[4] Antoine Charles de Gramont, Comte de Louvigny and afterwards Duc de Grammont (1604–1678), brother of Philibert Comte de Gramont

sex lost for ever You are the only Woman in the world, who are able to make stronger impressions Having thus describ'd his Charms to you, 'twill be no difficult matter for you to guess the effects of them In short, Madam all the spectators were as much affected, as the poor Count and his friend were mortified, to their great disappointment People still remember at the Hague how triumphantly Monsieur *de Louvigny* came off, and still make sport with telling the ill success of the other two Gentlemen If I were not in England I should often think on this adventure but, Madam, you destroy all objects and all ideas, you would eclipse a thousand *Middletons* [1] and a thousand *Louvignys* What has either sex left to oppose to your Charms?

LETTER 48 [Works 1728 II 215]

49

TO MADAME DE BEVERWEERT [2]

[1676]

We were scarce got three miles from *Euston*,[3] before we heartily repented our leaving it The beauty of

[1] Jane Middleton (or Myddleton) (1645–1692) was one of the celebrated beauties with whom tradition has populated the Court of Charles II Her lovers included Ralph Montagu and the philandering Comte de Gramont who frequently refers to her in his memoirs [*v* Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont by Hamilton] *v* Cott Ang Letter from Courtin the French Envoy to Pomponne July 2 1676 near me dwells Madame de Middleton who is the most beautiful woman in Lngland Poor St Evremond has fallen passionately in love with her in his dotage Saint Evremond wrote an epitaph for her [*v* Œuvres 1739 V 134 *passim*] See note Letter 54

[3] Near Thetford in Suffolk at this date the seat of the Earl of Arlington and after his death of the Dukes of Grafton

the Place; the agreeable manner of living there; the merit and obliging temper of the Master and Mistress [1] of the house, the Charms of the *beautiful Egyptian*, the indearing Qualities of the fair Indifferent, for whom 'tis impossible for any one that sees her to be indifferent; she whom we always behold with pleasure, and whom we always hear with admiration, that Wit so lively and so just, that Humour so gay and free, with a conduct so just and regular · all these Persons, all these things presented themselves to our imaginations, and convinc'd us, to our sorrow, that happiness is less known, and less valued when possess'd, than when lost.

These melancholy thoughts had lull'd the Ambassador of Portugal [2] asleep, out of sympathy, perhaps, with Madame *de Beverweert*, who never sleeps so soundly, as when she is in deep affliction. As the Constitutions of people are different, my concern kept me awake to reflect on what we had lost I entertain'd for some time these sad thoughts, which were not disagreeable; but one whimsy ushering in another, I found my self at last in one of *Don Quixot's* Fits; and being seiz'd, all on a sudden, with the spirit of Chivalry, I cried out with a loud voice, *Ye Knights*

through his daughter who married Charles, the first Duke, a natural son of the King Lord Arlington had built Euston on the site of an old house, and the elaborate and sumptuous effects he had introduced into its designs were duly noted by Evelyn during his visits there in 1671 and 1677 On the latter occasion, shortly after Saint Evremond's visit, he remarks that he found things "exceedingly improved," and speaks at length of the furnishings and appointments, the orangery, the canal and the cascade It was on Evelyn's first visit that the King and Mademoiselle Kéroualle are supposed to have been bedded for the first time

[1] Lady Arlington, the mistress of the house The "incomparable Carolina" of the next paragraph, was a sister of Saint Evremond's correspondent, but who the 'beautiful Egyptian' was, or who 'the fair Indifferent', I cannot say
[2] Don Francisco de Melos [*v* note *infra* and also Letter 50]

of Suffolk, ye Palmerins of Bury, come and confess to the Knight of the Tagus, and the Norman Don Quixot, that all the Orianas *and* Angelicas *in the world, are not worthy to carry the slippers of the most incomparable* Carolina *of Essex*

Transported as I was, and really more a *Don Quixot* than *Don Quixot* himself, I saw a brace of Higlers coming upon the Road, whom I immediately took for two Knights They had both of them Cudgels in their hands, which I fancied to be Lances, as I did their Caps, which were slouch'd down, like that of my Lord *Townshend*,[1] to be Helmets, with the Viser down This Equipage, which I mistook for a warlike preparation, made me conclude, that Blood and Battle would soon ensue, for which reason, I thrice cried out, as loud as I was able, *Sancho, Sancho, saddle Rozinante, and get Grizzle ready*

The Doctor, who was behind the Coach imagining that I call'd him, leapt down immediately and ask'd me what I wanted *Saddle Rozinante Sancho, with all expedition for lo! a new Adventure offers it self* The honest Doctor thought that being weary with riding in the Coach I had a mind to ease my self on Horseback upon which, he told me, *That they had not even horses enough for his Excellency's use* This answer of the Doctor brought me to my self again, and the Dreams of Knight Errantry which had got into my head, beginning to vanish, the *Knight of Tagus* came by degrees to be the *Portugal Ambassador*, the *Norman Don Quixot* changed to *Saint Evremond*, and the brace of Higlers passed quietly by us, with their Cudgels and Caps

I must needs own, that I made no great sacrifice to

[1] Sir Horatio Townshend (1630?–1687) created baron Townshend 1661 for the active part he played at the Restoration 1st viscount 1682

[2] One of the Earl of Arlington's Footmen so nick nam'd [note of Des Maizeaux]

Madame *de Beaumont*, when I lost my Reason for the love of her. The little I had to part with, made the loss inconsiderable. That indeed of the Ambassador was important, and accordingly he husbanded it much better than I did mine; and you'll find by what I am going to tell you, that he preserv'd it in a serene and compos'd, as if he had been altogether unconcern'd.

Coming to a River-side, whose Waters were swell'd by the excessive Rains that had fallen a little before, I represented to him with what ease he might put in execution what Mademoiselle *de la Roche*[1] in a Copy of Verses, once desir'd of him, as a proof of his Passion; which was nothing in the world else, but only to take a civil leap into the Water, and drown himself, in order to gain the reputation of an amorous Heroe. "If my Passion for Madame *de Beaumont*, *said he to me*, was dishonourable or base, I would never scruple to drown my self in such a nasty puddle as this: but all my Desires are pure and innocent, so that if ever the whim takes me to drown myself, I am resolv'd it shall be in clear and fair Water, that may bear some resemblance to the purity of my Thoughts." *My Lord*, said I to him, *if you are not to drown till you find out Water as clear as your Understanding, we shall not, in all probability, lose you this good while.*

We pass'd the River with these sorts of Discourses, when *Charles*[2] appear'd, and gallop'd towards us with so good a grace, that one would sooner have taken him for a Knight who was entering the lists in a tournament, than for a Lackey, who came to give us an account of his Errand. I must own, indeed,

[1] "Mademoiselle de la Roche Guilhen was then Governess to the Earl of Arlington's only daughter, who was afterwards married to the Duke of Grafton. Mademoiselle de la Roche is the Author of some French Translations, and of several Romances." [note of Des Maizeaux]

[2] A Lackey.

that his Eloquence was somewhat confus'd when he came to deliver himself, for after he had sputter'd out, *My Lord, Mr Jermyn*,[1] *Bury* my Lord *Crofts*,[3] and *Cheveley* some thirty times, all we could pick out of his incoherent Speech was, that *Charles* had found no body at home

If my concern for leaving so delicious a place as *Euston* could have given place to any other vexation, it would have been a great mortification to me, to see the ill success of my Letters, but one thing only could then affect me So I e'en left it to the care of my Lord Ambassador to make serious reflections upon the absence of Mr *Jermyn*

We laid aside all thoughts of going to *Cheveley*, imagining that Mr *Jermyn* was not there when we found one of his Servants at New-Market, who brought me a Letter from him This inform'd us, that being acquainted after his return from Bury, with our design of making him a visit he conjur d us to do him that honour, and not to fail him Accordingly, we went thither, and were very kindly receiv'd, by a Person, who tho he has taken his leave of the Court, has carried the civility and good taste of it into the Country

[1] Henry Jermyn (1638–1708) is not to be confused with his uncle Henry Jermyn 1st Earl of Saint Albans (d 1684) one of Saint Evremond s correspondents The nephew who appears in Hamilton s Memoirs as a hero in affairs of love and gallantry was created Baron Dover by James II in 1685 He died a Roman Catholic at Cheveley his seat near Newmarket in Cambridgeshire where Saint Evremond had stayed thirty years before and was buried in the Carmelite monastery at Bruges

[2] The incoherent valet Charles was referring presumably to Bury St Edmunds where Lord Crofts had a seat

[3] William 1st Baron Crofts of Saxham (1611 ?–1677) Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York that mad fellow an insipid buffoon remarks Hamilton in his Memoirs He was visited on his death bed at Bury St Edmunds by Evelyn [Diary Sept 4 1677]

While my Lord Ambassador was admiring the Grove, the Gardens, and the Wall-trees, while he was commending the Stables, plucking down this Wall, finishing the House, and contriving a better entrance to it, I fancied Madame *de Beverweert* playing at Billiards,[1] or at Ombre; and sometimes methought I saw her put a Pearl in the ear of a certain Knight, as a proper ornament for a person of his gallantry, and which might heighten the merit of his agreeable Civilities

After we had been treated with a noble Dinner, to which I brought more speculation than appetite, we were oblig'd to take our leaves of our Host, and pursue our intended Journey. My Lord Ambassador at our coming out of the Grove, resum'd the affliction he had laid aside for some minutes, and I continued that which I had not quitted 'Twas nothing else but melancholy; and the fit was so severe, that the worst Road, and the worst Weather in the world were not able to increase it

The tiresomeness of *Audley-End*[2] made a greater impression upon me. That vast and solitary house increas'd my melancholy, and so discompos'd the Comte *de Melos*, that he was scarce able to commend the Gallery, find fault with the Apartments, and make his critical reflections upon the Garden Then I

[1] This "most gentile, cleanly and ingenious game" was very popular after the Restoration Cotton, in his "Compleat Gamester" 1674, says that "for the excellency of the recreation, it is much approved of and played by most nations of Europe, specially in England, there being few towns of note therein which hath not a public billiard table, neither are they wanting in many noble and private families in the country"

[2] The seat of the Earls of Suffolk, near Saffron Walden in Essex Evelyn, who visited it in 1671, has a very different opinion of its merits, when he speaks of it as "indeed a cheerful piece of Gothic building, or rather *antico moderno*, but placed in an obscure bottom The cellars and galleries, he adds, are very stately" [*v* also the description in his

thought it was a proper time to make a second attempt upon him, and to omit nothing that lay in my power to cure the Despair of my friend, I civilly propos'd to him to hang himself on one of those tall and melancholy Trees, which according to Madame *de Beverweert* resembled my Lord *Suffolk*.[1] but I found that the Ambassador had got the ascendant over the Lover and that the Count was a Politician fit to negotiate Affairs at Nimeguen, rather than a desperate Lover who was resolv'd to put a tragical conclusion to the violence of his Passion Perhaps the Comte *de Melos*[2] would not die of grief in her absence because he was resolved to die of joy when he saw her at his return Perhaps he hopes that after he has given peace to Europe, Madame *de Beverweert* will not refuse to give him that happy repose which his long services so well deserve As for my self I am resolv'd to live, I own it frankly, and would be glad with all my heart to live for ever, that I might for ever adore and serve Madame *de Beverweert*

LETTER 49 [Works 1728 II 220]

Diary Aug 31 1654] Sixty years later Sir William Robinson echoes Saint Evremond's complaint in a letter to the Earl of Carlisle I was at Audley End, which stands upon a vast deal of ground but I think has not one comfortable room in it [Hist MSS Comm Castle Howard MSS p 87] Charles II was a frequent visitor to Audley End on his way to and from Newmarket and on one occasion rented the house from Lord Suffolk

[1] James Howard 3rd Earl (1619–1688) Gentleman of the Bedchamber

[2] The Comte de Melos was to have been the Portuguese Plenipotentiary at the Treaty of Nimeguen between France and Holland in 1678 but he died in London as he was about to set sail *v* Evelyn Diary Jan 28 1673 [Don Francisco de Melos] shewed me his curious collection of books and pictures He was a person of good parts and a virtuous man

50

TO MADAME DE BEVERWEERT

[1676]

I have made but a sorry apology with you, for the wrong use I made of the title we had to his Excellency's life. If you would be contented with the death of an ordinary person, I would offer you mine, that you might order Mademoiselle *de la Roche* to dispose of it as you think fit: but my death is not worth the notice. I am inconsiderable in every thing: a small Gamester with *Madame Mazarin*, a little Mortal with you, unworthy even to die in your service. I will therefore live, and join my resentment with yours, to revenge you upon the Ambassador, and thereby vindicate and retrieve the honour of your Charms I entertain no longer any hopes from the Rivers or Trees of *Audley-End* His Excellency is not an Excellency that will either drown, or hang himself. he fattens upon your hard usage, and your indifference gives him so strong and firm a gait, that I find in him a sufficient stock of health to conclude four Treaties of general Peace, instead of one.[1] If you continue to use him ill, he will be in a condition to buy all the Plenipotentiaries at Nimeguen: *ma lasciate far a me, sono furbo*[2]; and I will shew a trick to reduce Comte *de Melos* to a most lamentable condition. I have observ'd that your Cruelties prolong his life. take a contrary course, and kill him with Kindness. I remember a certain Amour wherein his Excellency was happy· but he did not mock the favours of the fair Lady, as he does your rigors; for

[1] Des Maizeaux observes at this point that "the Comte de Melos was extremely lean, and so stagger'd as he walk'd, that one would have thought he was going to fall at every step he set"

[2] i e "Leave it to me, I'm a trickster"

he had such a fit of sickness upon it, that his Physicians had much ado to restore his health When one has good Patterns to go by, it is no difficult matter to manage aright I advise you Madam to square your conduct by this example, and never believe me more, if four days good usage don't put off the Ambassador s journey to Nimeguen more effectually than the opposition of the Spaniards, and of all the Confederates together could do

LETTER 50 [Works 1728 II 225]

51

TO THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

[1677]

My Lord

Mr *Burnet*[1] is so strongly persuaded of the sincerity of your Conversion, that he speaks of it to all your Friends after this rate *I dare venture my own Salvation upon the same bottom with that of the Duke of*

[1] Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715) bishop of Salisbury the noble Buzzard of Dryden s The Hind and the Panther

> His praise of foes is venomously nice,
> So touched it turns a virtue to a vice

Among other pious but misguided enthusiasms his desire to convert notorious renegades was not the least remarkable a record of this survives in his account of The Life and Death of John Earl of Rochester whom he is said to have converted on his death bed his crowning achievement as the fox hunting bishop who never missed an opportunity of being in at the death Cf Mrs Nelly s [i e Nell Gwyn] Complaint, 1682

> E en now in Terror on my Bed I lye
> Send Doctor Burnet to me or I dye

I do not know when the Duke of Buckingham like many other dissolute people took it into his head to turn over a new leaf but there is no doubt that the new leaf did not stay clean very long

Buckingham, so firm a belief have I of the Reformation of his Life. "Conversion, Mr. *Burnet, says* Mr. *Waller*,[1] have a care what you say, people don't use to be converted so now a-days: 'tis neither to you, nor me, nor any person living, that we are beholden for this strange alteration in the Duke of *Buckingham*. 'Tis a new friend of his, but one that has been dead many hundred years since, that has very lately brought about this miraculous change that so surprizes us. I mean *Petronius Arbiter*, the most delicate man of his age for Poetry, Painting, and Musick.[2] One that perpetually studied and pursued Pleasure, one that turn'd the day into night, and the night into day, but at the same time, one who had so absolute a command over his Vices and Irregularities, that whenever he thought fit, he was one of the most regular men in the universe The Duke of *Buckingham*, who has long resembled him in a thousand other Qualities, was resolved of late to imitate him too in this. Thus I have shewn you, Mr. *Burnet*, from whence proceeds this alteration in his Grace's Life, which you, it seems, have mistaken for a Conversion."

But with Mr. *Burnet's* and Mr. *Waller's* leave, I shall account for it after another manner. 'Tis a certain Maxim with me, that no man of a nice palate can love Vice, when once it ceases to be agreeable, therefore I don't wonder that a Person of a refined taste, takes up with the virtue of Continence in the North, where there are no Objects to tempt him. But I dare engage, that if your Grace were among Beauties that had Charms enough to tempt you, we should soon find the new Convert of Mr. *Burnet*, and Mr. *Waller's* new *Petronius*, to be nothing in the world but the true genuine Duke of *Buckingham*.

[1] Edmund Waller, the poet [see note, Letters 23 and 41]

[2] Petronius, the Emperor Nero's "Elegantiae arbiter", or director of the Imperial pleasures, and author of the Satyricon, one of Saint Evremond's favourite studies.

Heaven forbid that I should ever persuade you to love But I have another sin to propose to you which of your self you would never guess, and yet I recommend it sincerely to you, and from the bottom of my heart I mean Covetousness which in my opinion would be more advantageous to your Grace, than the Wisdom of Philosophers, or the Glory of Conquerors To be short, I should rather chuse to see your Grace resemble *Sir Charles Herbert*,[1] or any of the *Heroes* in Lombard Street, than either *Socrates* or *Caesar* The greater the difficulty is the greater is the merit of surmounting it Now all the world knows that your Grace will find more trouble to imitate the former, than the two latter Gentlemen

As we don't all on a sudden arrive to the height of Perfection, I do not exact from you that severe discipline of Œconomy which makes a man deny himself every thing amidst an affluence of all What I beg of your Grace, is that you would have a watchful eye upon those who have the fingering of your Money, to keep them honest in spite of themselves For unless out of tenderness to their Souls you hinder them from playing the Knaves I dare swear for them that they will venture Damnation an hundred times a day and all in your Grace's service

If ever you return to London, with a small Retinue, but a great deal of Money in your pocket, you will certainly be the wonder of the whole Nation If you neglect this advice the greater part of the world will never be for you and you must content your self with a few Admirers in private, of whom your most humble Servant shall always be the first

LETTER 51 [Works 1728 II 243] I am uncertain of the date of this letter Planhol trusting it seems to the sequence of the old editions dates it 1677 but as usual gives no reasons

[1] I have not been able to trace the identity of this money grubbing Hero of Lombard Street

It is clear from the letter that Buckingham was in the north of England, perhaps in Yorkshire where he had property. In 1677 he had been confined to the Tower for several months for questioning in open debate the legality of Parliament On his petition for release being granted, it is probable that he retired into the country to continue his intrigues against the government Since he was not restored to favour until 1683, this letter may have been addressed to him any time between 1677–1683

52

TO THE EARL OF SAINT ALBANS [1]

[1677]

No company is so agreeable and good, but one time or other it must part: therefore, by a much stronger reason, a melancholy society ought not to last for ever As for ours, my Lord, 'tis the most doleful that ever was known. Since I have begun to play at Madame *Mazarin's*,[2] I have not had Spadillo six times, Basto has come oftener to me, but 'tis a decoy that tempts me to play, and causes me to be

[1] For note on the Earl of Saint Albans, *v* Letter 15.

[2] Saint Evremond's inveterate passion for cards is frequently mentioned in his doggerel verses, and in the letters (*q v*), written in his last years It was a passion he shared with most of the great nobles and Ladies of the Court, amongst whom the Duchesse Mazarin was a notoriously successful player It is said that Nell Gwyn lost £5,000 at a sitting to the Duchess, this is not surprising if Theophilus Lucas's account of the latter's behaviour at the table is true "She would play as fair as any person when she found her gamester play only upon the square, for she play'd so well that scarce anyone could match her, but when she had a sharp gamester to deal with, she would play altogether upon the sharp at any game upon the cards, and generally came off a winner" [Lives of the Gamesters, 1714 reprinted in "Games and Gamesters of the Restoration", 1928] In view of what Saint Evremond says, later in this letter, of the Duchess filching his fish-counters, Lucas is probably telling the truth

beasted [1] I draw none but Trays of Clubs or Spades, or Sixes of Hearts and Diamonds However, my Lord I return heaven thanks, when nothing but lamentations or murmurs might be expected from me God be praised, I set a good example, and such a one as your partner ought to set however, it will, at long run, ruin my Affairs, and not mend yours, which made me say last night, like *Monsieur de Bellegarde, I pay and play no more, and do what I please*

Let us comfort ourselves, my Lord, that we are in a better condition than those that win our money, for 'tis better by much to suffer an injury, than to do it Madame *Mazarin* has an excellent hand at filching my *Fishes*, and dropping a Card out of the Stock, when I play without taking in, with four Matadors [3] in hand I address my self to the Prince *de Monaco*,[4] who tells me very seriously, and with an air of sincerity *Upon my word Monsieur de Saint Evremond, I look'd another way* Your friend the Marquis *de Saissac*[5]

[1] Saint Evremond is speaking in terms of the Spanish game of Ombre or Hombre *Spadillo* is the ace of spades *basto* the ace of clubs in the next sentence *trays* of course are *threes*

Monsieur de Bellegarde was the maternal uncle of the Marquise de Montespan mistress of Louis XIV He was somewhat passionate and whimsical says Des Maizeaux, who adds that his remark quoted in this letter became proverbial among the gamesters his contemporaries

[3] Matadors are certain leading cards in the game of Ombre—Spadillo (ace of spades) Manille (twoes in the black sevens in the red suits) and Basto (ace of clubs) in order of their respective importance

[4] The Prince of Monaco visited England in 1676 and caused a slight sensation by competing with the King for the favours of the Duchesse Mazarin with some success indeed for the King in a pet temporarily stopped the pension granted to his favourite [*v* note Letter 54]

[5] The Marquis de Saissac an intimate of Madame Mazarin's and a great gambler Evelyn records in his Diary [Sept 2nd 1676] I paid £1 700 to the Marquis De Sissac [*sic*] which he had lost to my Lord Berkeley and which I heard the Marquis lost at play in a night or two'

laughs much, and decides nothing; and *Monsieur Courtin*[1] declaies that my hardships are great. But all the declarations of Monsieur *Courtin* signify little oi nothing. The Ambassador is as little regarded in this house, as he would be at the Exchange, if he went about to justify Sir *Ellis Layton*[2] there In this extremity I call heaven to witness, but heaven has no more ciedit than the Ambassador.

Come to town, my Lord, to maintain youi own rights youi self, the Country was never made for such as you. Let those be disgusted with the world, with whom the world is alieady disgusted. But let those persons of worth and honour, who are beloved by it, still continue in it A man of honour and

[1] Honoré de Courtin had been sent to England by Louvois, at Louis XIV's request, as Envoy Extraordinary to assist the resident ambassador, Ruvigny, in discovering among other things exactly how matters stood between Charles II and the Duchesse Mazarin It was of the utmost importance to Louis that she should not steal Charles's affections from the Duchess of Portsmouth who was being used by Louis as a foil for his political intrigues Courtin seems to have been an amiable and amusing creature and found no difficulty in becoming intimate with both duchesses, whose behaviour he is punctual to relate in his lively dispatches to Louvois "He was short, says Saint Simon, with a beauish face and a somewhat ridiculous figure he pleased everybody everywhere" A full account of Courtin's share in what M Jusserand calls the "célebre Ambassade", with quotations from his letters, which are preserved at the Quai D'Orsay in Paris, is given by Mr C H Hartmann in "The Vagabond Duchess" [1926]

[2] This is Sir Elisha Leighton (d 1685), the friend of Pepys, and secretary to the Prize Office and to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland Pepys's Mr Gray said of him that "for a speech of forty words the wittiest of men ever he knew", and Pepys himself that "he was one of the best companions at a meal in the world and a wonderful witty ready man for sudden answers and little tales, and sayings very extraordinary witty" Saint Evremond's quip about justifying his conduct on the Exchange refers to an embezzlement of which he had been accused by the London Merchants

politeness ought to live and die in a capital City, and, in my opinion, there are but three capital Cities in Europe, Rome, London, and Paris But Paris is no longer a place for your Lordship to live in, of the many friends you had there, some are dead, and the others are imprison d Rome cannot suit with you, nor can the Disciple of St *Paul* like a place, where St *Peter's* successor is the sovereign this goodly and great City called London, daily expects you, and here, my Lord, you ought to fix your abode Free conversations at table, with a few guests, a game at Ombre at her Royal Highness s,[1] and Chess at home, will make you as easily wait the last period of life at London as Monsieur *des Yveteaux* did at Paris He died at eighty years of age, causing a Saraband to be play d to him a little before he expir d *that his Soul* as he express'd himself, *might slide away the easier* You'll not pitch upon Musick to soften the hardships of that voyage A Vole[3] at Ombre, and three aces eldest hand against three

[1] i e Maria Beatrice Duchess of Modena the second wife of James Duke of York and a first cousin once removed, of the Duchesse Mazarin

Nicolas de la Fresnaye (1559–1649) son of the poet Vauquelin de la Fresnaye For an account of this extravagant gentleman see Melanges d Histoire et de Litterature, by Vigneuil Marville [i e Noel Bonaventure D Argonne] Vol I p 177 *et seq* Paris 1725 M Des Iveteaux says the author had both wit and learning but there was something very bizarre and fantastic in his behaviour It is certain that he became intoxicated with a passion for pleasure which made him ridiculous even to those who were disposed to excuse him He ended his days in a world of his own dressed as a shepherd the birds hopping on to his flute as he piped to an imaginary flock which he spent his days pro tecting from the ravages of imaginary wolves [*v* Letter 117]

[3] i e a grand slam in the game of Ombre Cf Boileau Sat X

> Puis sur une autre table avec un air plus sombre
> S en aller mediter une vole au jeu d hombre

nines at Crimpo,[1] will determine your days with as great satisfaction. This will not happen the Lord knows when, if you come and live at London. but I'll not give you six months life, if you stay in the Country with those melancholy thoughts you have taken up there.

LETTER 52 [Works, 1728 II 212]

53

TO THE EARL OF SAINT ALBANS

[1677]

I have been at Death's door, my Lord, since I had the honour of seeing your Lordship, and what contributes to make me yet more unhappy, there is no Distemper now stirring at London, but only what I languish under, no Gout, no Rheumatism, nay not so much as the Tooth-ache. My Lord *Arlington*, to whom you yielded the title of the first gouty Man in England, might now take twenty turns in the Mall, as well as the good Gentlewoman that uses to attend you As for my self, I am not yet fully restor'd to my health, and had it not been for some Remedies I met with, I had certainly died.

But why, my Lord, should you resolve to pass the winter in a Country where the Horses are a hundred times better look'd after than we are? where there are *Mayernes* [2] to cure the diseases of the Race-horses,

[1] Crimpo or Crimp, an obsolete card-game.

[2] The eminent physician, Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne (1573–1655), came to England in 1603, and from 1611 to his death resided permanently in this country He was consulted by the royal family and by the nobility, and carried out a number of interesting experiments in chemistry, physics and medicine, for which he deserves to be numbered among the precurseurs of the scientific renaissance of the seventeenth century

and little better than Farriers to cure those of the men If you were possessed with any of those religious Enthusiasms which make so many Fanaticks weary of their lives, I should be able to account for this strange impatience of yours to die But my Lord, if you are a Man like one of us if you still preserve a natural inclination to live as Monsieur the Mareschal *de Villeroy*,[1] the Master of the Horse to the King of France Monsieur *de Rivigny*[3] and your other Contemporaries continue to do, why should you so obstinately pitch upon a place where you don't pass one day, without retrenching five or six, at least, of your life?

But I dwell too long upon a Discourse, which I ought to have lightly passed over I must now come to more agreeable ideas The Duchess of *Portsmouth* will give you what share in her Bank you please My Lord *Hyde*[4] promises to shew you certain Civilities, which will almost amount to a Confidence My Lord Ambassador offers to give you a full insight into the affairs of Hungary and the War that the Northern Princes are now going to engage in, and what I

[1] I am doubtful if this is François de Villeroi (1644–1730) who was defeated at the battle of Ramilies Though technically a contemporary of the Earl of St Albans he was younger than him by many years

The Master of the Horse according to Des Maizeaux was a Monsieur de Beringhen

[3] [*v* note Letters 73 and 128]

[4] Laurence Hyde (1641–1711) the second son of the celebrated Earl of Clarendon created Earl of Rochester in 1681 after the death of the merry and debauched John Wilmot Earl of Rochester [*v* note Letter 101] and dismissed from the office of Lord High Treasurer a year later for peculation He was a patron of Dryden who commemorates him in Absalom and Achitophel as

> *Hushai* the friend of *David* [Charles II] in distress
> In public storms of manly stedfastness
> By foreign treaties he informed his youth
> And joined experience to his native truth

esteem much more, the Duke of *Ormond*[1] is ready to play with you at Tuck-Track[2] without odds. You will tell me now, that you are scarce able to see,[3] and that you are troubled with so many indispositions that the World is weary of you My Lord, you take the thing wrong: 'tis the Country, and not the World that is weary of you.

In the Country, people judge of you by the weakness of your sight: your Infirmities there are taken for faults; and you can't imagine what a despicable opinion your robust Country Gentlemen have of an infirm Courtier. Here in Town, my Lord, you are valued for the strength of your Judgment; your Infirmities are pitied, and your good Qualities reverenc'd.

What a difference is there then between those two places to live in! and yet, my Lord, you have chosen that which is so contrary to your Health, and to your Reputation. That which uses to be the greatest punishment of persons in disgrace, you have voluntarily imposed upon your self: you have depriv'd your self of the Society of men that know the world, and with whom you have always lived A man may

[1] The great Duke of Ormond, "to which epithet, says Sir Walter Scott, he has a just title," was James Butler, the 12th Earl and 1st Duke (1610–1688), and *Barzillai* in "Absalom and Achitophel".

> "The Court he practised, not the Courtier's art
> Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart,
> Which well the noblest objects knew to choose,
> The fighting warrior, and recording muse"

At this date he was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland

[2] Trick-track, a popular and elaborate variation of Backgammon

[3] Six years later there was no pretending blindness, for Evelyn records that at a dinner party given for the Duchess of Grafton at the Lord Chamberlain's on September 18, 1683 "my Lord St Albans [is] now grown so blind, that he could not see to take his meat"

comfort himself for the loss of his Fortune, but cannot receive consolation after he has lost the sweetness of agreeable Conversation and is perpetually persecuted by Impertinents Relieve your self with Reason as long as you please the relief of Reason signifies nothing, where the delicacy of one s Taste is offended

Return, my Lord, return to your friends, that know your merit, as you know theirs There is not one of them who will not contribute, as far as in him lies, either to your relief, or your pleasure The politeness of my Lord *Sunderland*,[1] will soon make you sensible that that sort of life, which you thought the sweetest and most natural, is rude and gross and that easy, free and unconstrain d way of living which he has set up at Court, will for ever make you out of love with the false tranquillity you boast of in the Country The Duchesse *Mazarin* will ease you of your scruple about Visits, she will not take it ill that you sit just by her without seeing her, and, less sensible of the injury she will receive than of the loss you will suffer by it she will make you taste the sweetness of a Conversation which is not at all inferior to the

[1] Robert Spencer the 2nd Earl (1640–1702) one of the most unscrupulous politicians in an unscrupulous age

> The deep Reserves of whose Apostate Mind
> No skill can reach no Principles can bind
> A supple whisp ring Minister ne er just
> Confided still still failing in his trust
> And only constant to unnat ral lust'

[Poems on Affairs of State Vol II 1703 p 430] His politeness to the King s mistresses after the Restoration raised him to various important offices including that of Ambassador to France Saint Evremond who was careful never to involve himself in political intrigue probably knew him as he knew many of his disreputable contemporaries only as a man of wit as an ardent gambler at cards and on the turf and as the Minister who in 1686 tried to persuade him to become Secretary of the Cabinet a post which he declined

charms of her Beauty. For your sake she will suspend her eagerness for Basset,[1] and oblige you with that pure and calm Reason, which she refuses us every day. Mr *Waller* has in store a delicious Conversation for you. I am not so vain as to tell you any thing of my own: I had better promise you my services on Sundays, and suffer my self to lose at Chess, every time that Monsieur *de Saissac* bets on my side. I will say nothing to you of Mistress *Crofts* since she has been *Dutchess of Chastellerault*, I can't tell how she will behave her self towards the *Earl of St. Albans*.[2]

If these temptations are too weak, and you are fully resolved to retire out of the world from this hour, pray consider, my Lord, that a Person of Quality ought to retire into a capital City. Your Reason will steal you out of the world in a City, whenever you please: your Imagination will carry you into the Country, even when you would not have it. Live here, my Lord, like a Philosopher at your own house. 'Twill be a new merit, for which the world will esteem you. To live like a Philosopher in Suffolk, is to make one's self obscure rather than wise, and forgotten by others, instead of knowing one's self.

The greatest Philosophers of Antiquity lived in

[1] A game of cards, resembling Faro, which had just been introduced from France.

[2] "Mistress Crofts, sister to the Lord Crofts, had been one of the Maids of Honour to the Queen. After she retired from Court, her house became a pleasurable Rendezvous, where the Earl of St. Albans, and two or three more Persons of Quality, used to sup almost every night. The Earl of Arran [1658–1712], afterwards Duke of Hamilton, paid assiduous court to that Lady, whereupon the Earl of St. Albans withdrew. Saint Evremond in this place rallies this new Intrigue, calling Mistress Crofts, Duchess of Chastellerault, because the Earl of Arran had been in France, to pursue an old claim of the House of Hamilton, to the Duchy of Chastellerault." [note of Des Maizeaux]

the finest City of Greece, and he who advised his Disciples to *conceal their Life*, had delicate fine Gardens at Athens where five or six of his Friends plaid the Philosophers with him [1] I know not how to find my way from Athens back to London However I could wish that you would return thither as soon as I And now, my Lord, I am here to expect you, and desire you to bring Mr *Jermyn* [2] along with you Restore him to the World even in spite of himself It will not be long ere he will return you thanks for a violence so happily committed, neither will you my Lord, be behind hand with us long, for owing this Resolution to our advice

LETTER 53 [Works 1728 II 239]

54

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN UPON FRIENDSHIP [3]

[1678]

Of all the sayings of the Antients, which you have so judiciously observ'd and so happily retain'd none affects me more than that of *Agesilaus* when he recommends the affair of one of his Friends to another [4] *If Nicias*, says he, *has committed no fault, set him at*

[1] i e the philosopher Epicurus He bought his delicate fine gardens the *Κηποι Επικουρου* 306 B C when he was about thirty five years of age and there discussed with his disciples his system of philosophy
[*v* note Letter 49]

[3] For an account of Hortense Mancini Duchesse Mazarin see Introduction The best biography is by C H Hartmann The Vagabond Dutchess London 1926

[4] This incident is recorded in Plutarch s Life of Agesilaus King of Sparta Agesilaus according to Plutarch wrote these words in a letter to Hydrieus the Carian They are not recorded by Xenophon or Nepos in their lives of Agesilaus

liberty; if he has, set him at liberty for my sake: let the matter be how it will, set him at liberty. Behold here, Madam, the force of Friendship! A King of the Lacedemonians, so upright, so virtuous, so severe, a King, who ought to give his Subjects examples of Justice, not only allows, but even commands Injustice, in an instance wherein his Friend is concern'd.

Had a private man acted as *Agesilaus* did, there would be no wonder in the case. Private men are but too much fetter'd by the Laws of Civil Society; so that one of the greatest pleasures they can enjoy, is sometimes to follow the dictates of Nature, and to indulge their own Inclinations. 'Tis with regret they obey those that govern; and on the contrary, love to serve those they are pleas'd with: but that a King, taken up with his greatness, should renounce the adorations of the Publick, and derogate from his own Authority and Power, to descend to himself, and feel the most natural sentiments of Humanity, 'tis what is not easy to apprehend, and which well deserves our Reflections.

'Tis certain, a man ought not to look on his Prince as his Friend The great distance between Sovereignty and Subjection, does not admit that union of Affections, which is necessary to love well; and the power of a Prince, and the duty of Subjects, have in them something opposite to the Tenderness that Friendship requires

To exercise dominion without violence, is all that the best of Princes can do, to obey without murmuring, is all that can be required of the best of Subjects. Now Moderation and Docility have no great allurements · and those two Vertues are not lively enough to raise inclinations, and kindle the ardour of Friendship. The ordinary intercourse between Kings and their Courtiers, is generally an intercourse of Interest Courtiers pursue fortune with Kings, Kings expect services from Courtiers

However, there are times, wherein either the fatigue of business, or the being disgusted with pomp and magnificence, obliges Princes to seek in the purity of Nature, those enjoyments which they cannot find in their Grandeur Tired out with ceremonies, affected gravity, state, and show, they cast about for those natural Sweets, and endearments of Freedom, of which their condition deprives them Perplexed and troubled with jealousies and suspicions, they look out, at last, for a bosom Friend, to whom they may open a heart which they keep shut up to all the rest of the world The flattery of fawning Adulators makes them wish for a sincere Friend, and this produces those Confidants, who are call'd *Favourites* those persons endear'd to Princes, with whom they ease themselves of the burden of their secrets, and with whom they are pleas'd to enjoy all the sweets, which a familiar intercourse, and a free conversation may yield to intimate Friends

But how dangerous are such Friendships to a Favourite who is more sollicitous of shewing his Love than watchful on his conduct and behaviour! This Confidant thinks to find a Friend, where he meets with his Master, and, by an unexpected turn, his familiarity is punish'd, as the indiscreet freedom of a Servant who forgot himself Those Courtiers, whose conduct is ruled by their interest, find in their own industry wherewithal to make themselves agreeable and prudence makes them avoid whatever may be offensive or displeasing He who truly loves his Master, only consults his own heart and affection he thinks himself safe in what he speaks and what he does, by what he feels within himself, and the warmth of an ill govern'd Friendship causes his ruin, where the caution of those who have not the same affection, would preserve to him all the advantages of his fortune Thus men generally lose the favour of Princes, who are more careful of punishing what

offends their Character, than easy to forgive what is done by an impulse of Nature. Happy those Subjects, whose Princes know how to excuse what the weakness of human condition renders excusable in Men! But let us not envy all those who make themselves dreaded: for they lose the pleasures both of loving and of being loved. Let us return to more particular considerations on Friendship.

I ever admir'd *Epicurus's* Morals, and what I value most in his Morals, is, the preference he gives to Friendship, before all other Virtues. In truth, Justice is only a Virtue establish'd for the support of human Society, it is the work of Men, whereas Friendship is the work of Nature. Friendship is the only pleasure of our Lives, when Justice, with all its rigors, can hardly make us safe. If Prudence makes us avoid some evils, Friendship alleviates them all: if Prudence makes us acquire some goods, 'tis Friendship gives a relish to the enjoyment of them. Have you occasion for wholesome Counsel, who can give it you but a faithful Friend? Whom can you entrust with your Secrets, to whom can you open your Heart, and unveil your Soul, unless it be a Friend? and how tiresome would it be for a man to be always close confined within himself, without a Confidant either of his affairs or pleasures? Enjoyments cease to be so, as soon as they are not communicated. *Even the heavenly Felicity would be tiresome, without the confidence of a Friend*[1] I have observ'd, that devout Persons

[1] "This is a Thought of one of the Antients" [note of Des Maizeaux, who appends the same note to the passage, which occurs later in the letter, beginning "We use a great deal better, etc"] I am indebted to Mr D W Lucas for the following note on the two passages (1) "And this (the importance of friendship) would be seen most clearly if some God should remove us from the company of men, and set us somewhere in solitude, and there provide us with abundant wealth of all the things which nature can need, but remove utterly all power of seeing a fellow being, who

who are most disengaged from the world, and love God with the greatest affection, love in God other devout Persons that they may have visible objects of their Friendship One of the great Pleasures which is found in loving God, is to be allow'd to love those that love him

I wonder'd formerly to see so many Confidants of both Sexes upon our Stage, but found, at last, that the use of them was very prudently introduc'd for a Passion imparted to no body, proves oftener a tiresome constraint to the Mind than an agreeable pleasure to the Senses As an Amour cannot be made publick without shame so it cannot be kept altogether secret without uneasiness but with a Confidant, a man is more safe in his conduct, his Uneasinesses are allay'd his Pleasures redouble, and all his Troubles diminish Poets, who well know the constraint which attends a conceal'd Passion make us talk of it to the Winds to Rivulets, and to Trees upon a belief, that 'tis better to speak of what one feels even with inanimate things, than to keep it too secret and make one's own silence a second Torment

As I have no shining merit to boast of, I hope I may be allow'd to mention one upon which men do seldom value themselves, which is the having gain'd the entire Confidence of my Friends and the most secret person that ever I knew was only reserv'd with others, that he might be the more open with me He conceal'd nothing from me as long as we

would be so iron hearted as to endure such a life and not be deprived by loneliness of the enjoyment of all his pleasures? [Cicero de Amicitia XXIII 86] (2) It was a good saying of Cato's Some men derive more profit from bitter enemies than from those friends who appear amiable for the former often speak the truth the latter never [*ibid* XXIV 90] Mr Lucas adds Saint Evremond may of course have got the same ideas served up by some moralist like Seneca Cicero himself was probably copying largely from Theophrastus

convers'd together; and he would, perhaps, have been glad of an opportunity to tell me every thing, when we were asunder. The remembrance of such an endearing Confidence is very sweet to me; but the thoughts of the condition he is in, is still more grievous I have contracted a familiarity with my own Misfortunes, but never shall with his; and since I can bestow nothing but sorrow on his Disgrace, no day shall pass, but I shall grieve and lament it.[1]

Such entire Confidences, admit of no manner of dissimulation. *We use a great deal better an Enemy whom we openly profess to hate, than a Friend from whom we conceal any thing, or with whom we dissemble*[2]: for, an enemy may, indeed, receive more hurt by our hatred, but a friend will suffer a greater injury by our dissimulation. The latter is a vice which is not tolerated in civil Society therefore, with more reason, ought it not to be suffer'd in private Friendships

But to preserve so precious a thing as Friendship, it is not enough to be upon one's guard against Vices, but one must be so even against Virtues, nay, against Justice it self The severities of Justice do not consist with the tenderinesses of Friendship; whosoever pretends to be just, is either conscious he is already an ill friend, or inclin'd to be so The Gospel seldom recommends Justice, without recommending Charity at the same time; with design, in my opinion, to soften a Virtue which would be austere, and almost savage, but for the mixture of a little Love. Justice, blended with other virtues, is excellent, but all alone, without any mixture of

[1] In this paragraph Saint Evremond is probably thinking of his old friend, Nicolas Fouquet, the Superintendant of Finance, who, after his arrest in 1659 as a result of which Saint Evremond had to fly the country had been confined in various prisons, at Angers, Amboise, Vincennes and finally at Pignerol

[2] See Note, p 198

good nature, mildness, and humanity, it is more wild than the men it first brought together, and it may be said, that it banishes all manner of sweetness and agreeableness from the civil Society it has settled

Friendship is not only apprehensive of the rigour of Justice, but likewise of the profound reflections of Wisdom that keep us too much within our selves, when Inclination would carry us towards another Friendship requires a fire that animates, and does not like circumspections that stop it it ought always to be absolute mistress of the fortunes, and sometimes of the lives of those it unites

In this union of wills, different Opinions may, however, be allow'd but disputing, in such a case, ought to be a conference in order to clear doubts, and not an exasperating contention A man ought not to stir up passion, where he only seeks for lights, and therefore Friends ought to avoid very clashing Opinions in Religion A man who subjects all to Reason, and one who depends wholly upon Authority, will hardly agree together *Hobbes* and *Spinoza*, who admit neither Prophecies nor Miracles, but upon a long and judicious examination, will have no great value for those credulous people, who receive the *Revelations* of *St Bridget*, and the *Legends of the Saints*, as Articles of Faith I remember I have seen an estrangement among Devout persons because some of them entertain'd too great apprehensions from God's Justice, and others too large hopes from his Goodness

I should never have done, if I would explain whatever conduces either to establish or to destroy the confidence of such Friendships They cannot subsist without faithfulness and secrecy, for 'tis what makes them secure but this is not sufficient to render them agreeable and endearing There must be besides safety, a certain union between two Souls, which is form'd by a secret charm, I cannot express,

and which is more easily felt than perfectly known. A familiar intercourse with a beautiful, ingenious, and judicious Woman, would, in my opinion, make such a union yet more agreeable, if one could depend on its duration. But when any thing of Passion mixes with it, disgust terminates confidence with Love, and if there be nothing but bare friendship, the sentiments of friendship cannot hold it long against the motions of a Passion.

I have wonder'd a hundred times why the Fair Sex had been excluded from the management of publick Affairs, for I found some of them more skilful and abler than men. I was, at length, sensible that this exclusion did not proceed either from the malice of envy, or any suggestion of private interest; not yet from an ill opinion of their wit, but merely (I hope I may speak it, as I mean it, without offence) because one could not rely on their weak and unsteady affection, their heart being too much sway'd by their natural frailty. *A Woman who may wisely govern a Kingdom one day, will give herself a master the next, as one would not entrust with the looking after a dozen of Hens*, to use Cardinal *Mazarin's* own words. What would not Madame *de Chevreuse*,[1] the Countess of *Carlisle*,[2] and the Princess *Palatine*,[3] have brought

[1] Marie, Duchesse de Chevreuse, by her second marriage to Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Chevreuse (1600–1679) played a brilliant part in the squabbles of the Fronde and the plots against the Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin [*v* Madame de Chevreuse Victor Cousin Paris, 1856]

[2] Lucy Hay, daughter of the "Wizard Earl" of Northumberland, and wife of the munificent first Earl of Carlisle (1599–1660) Her beauty won for her the admiration of many of the Caroline lyric poets, and her intelligence involved her in the intrigues of the presbyterian party during the Civil War.

[3] Anne de Gonzague, daughter of Charles de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers, wife of the Prince Palatine (1616–1684) Like the Duchesse de Chevreuse, she exercised her beauty and her wit during the Fronde, on the side of the Queen-mother, Anne of Austria

about, had not they spoil'd by their affections, all they might have perform'd by their Wit? The errors of the Heart are far more dangerous than the extravagancies of the Imagination these may, every one of them, be corrected by the Judgment, whereas our Affection inclines us to evil, and makes us adhere to it, in spite of all the lights of our understanding

Video meliora proboque
Deteriora sequor [1]

A very ingenious Woman [2] told me one day, that *she return'd God thanks every night for her Wit, and pray'd him, every morning to preserve her from the follies of her Heart* Oh *Lot* Oh *Lot* [3] how little you are in danger from these follies! be thankful to God for your bright parts and rely on your self for your Inclinations I know some persons, *Lot*, who have no great reason to thank God for your Wit The little *Bouffette* [4] among the rest would willingly consent that your Heart were somewhat disorder'd, and your Judgment less free and independent

Superior Genius how pleas'd are your Vassals to admire in you so much Reason and so much Beauty! What satisfaction is it to them to see you despise the tedious discourses of Beauties, the fulsome Conver-

[1] Ovid Metamorphoses VII 21
Ninon de Lanclos [note of Des Maizeaux]

[3] This was the nickname of the Duchesse Mazarin's intimate friend and gossip Charlotte Beverweert daughter of Louis de Nassau Comte de Beverweert of the princely house of Orange and Ambassador from the States General to the Court of Saint James She was the sister of the first Countess of Arlington and of Emilia wife of the famous gambler Thomas Butler Earl of Ossory Saint Evremond was the constant companion of these noblemen and a friend of Mademoiselle Beverweert [v his letters to her Nos 49 and 50 of this edition] and his sudden apostrophe in this letter can be explained if we assume that anything he wrote to the Duchesse Mazarin was sure to be shewn to her faithful *Lot*

[4] I have been unable to solve the identity of the suitor disguised by the nickname Boufette

sations about Commodes, new-fashion'd Sleeves, and Indian Stuffs? How sweet it is to see you abandon the false Gallantry of others, *Baskets full of Ribbons*, and the genteel Cane of Monsieur *de Nemours*![1] Soul elevated above all other Souls, what pleasure it is to see you make such a noble use of what you have; so little regret what you had, and so little desire what you have not!

Add, Madam, the merit of the Heart, to that of the Soul and Mind: defend that heart of yours against *officious Fops*,[2] those busy fellows, who are ever ready to shut a door or a window, to take up a glove or a fan.

Love does not injure the reputation of Ladies; but the slender merit of their Lovers disgraces them. You'd do me wrong, Madam, if you thought me an enemy to Tenderness: for as old as I am, I should be sorry to be free from it. We love as long as we can draw breath. What I desire in Friendship is, that Knowledge should go before Affection, and that an esteem justly form'd in the Mind, should animate it self in the Heart, and receive there such warmth as is necessary for Friendship, as well as Love. Love therefore, Madam, but love no objects but what are worthy of you. I contradict my self here unawares, and forbid whatever I will allow. To give you such a piece of advice, is to be more severe than Preachers in a pulpit, and less indulgent than Father Confessors.

If my wishes were accomplish'd, you should be ambitious, and govern those that govern others. Either become mistress of the World, or remain

[1] An allusion to Mme de Lafayette's celebrated romance "La Princesse de Clèves" (1678)

[2] Des Maizeaux notes "Our Auther calls them in French 'Rendeurs de petits soins', an expression taken out of 'La Carte de Tendre'" [a fantastic map of the emotions that adorns the first volume of Madeleine de Scudéry's no less fantastic romance 'Clelie']

mistress of your self, not in order to pass tedious days in that sad and melancholy Indolence, which some would trump up for Virtue, but to have an absolute power over your affections, and over rule your pleasures

Sometimes let Reason with a sovereign sway
Controul all your desires
Sometimes let Reason to your heart give way
And fan your warmest fires

If Confidence be one of the greatest comforts of life, enjoy the sweetness of it both with your dear *Lot*, and with him whom you may be sure you can trust, as well as your self

LETTER 54 [Works 1728 II 202] The circumstances in which this letter came to be written are related by Des Maizeaux The Prince of Monaco came about this time (1676) into England and became a passionate admirer of Madame Mazarin Saint Evremond soon observed that she was not insensible and as he was privy to the mystery of the Dutchess's Journey [to England for Charles II's pleasure] he omitted nothing to prevent so fatal an Amour and represented the consequences of it in lively colours But because what we take in by Reading makes a deeper impression sometimes than in transitory Conversation he address'd to her a little *Discourse on Friendship* wherein he artfully insinuates himself into her conscience

55

TO THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM UPON OPERAS[1]

[1678]

I have long had a desire to tell your Grace my thoughts of Operas, and to acquaint you with the

[1] For the Duke of Buckingham's rather primitive views on the same subject *t* Letter 45 an early sketch of Saint Evremond's views on Opera I have retained Des Maizeaux plural *Operas* a translation of the original *les Opéras* the singular of which was not used until the early eighteenth century

difference I have obseiv'd betwixt the Italian and French way of singing. The occasion I had of speaking of it, at the Duchesse *Mazarin's*, has rather increased than satisfied that desire, therefore I will gratify it in the Discourse I now send to your Grace [1]

I shall begin with great freedom, and tell your Grace, that I am no great admirer of Comedies in musick, such as now a-days are in request. I confess I am not displeased with their magnificence, the Machines have something that is surprizing; the Musick, in some places, is charming, the whole together seems wonderful: but it must be granted me also, that this wonderful is very tedious; for where the Mind has so little to do, there the Senses must of necessity languish. After the first pleasure that surprize gives us, the eyes are taken up, and at length grow weary of being continually fix'd upon the same object In the beginning of the Concerts, we observe the justness of the Concords; and amidst all the Varieties that unite to make the sweetness of the harmony, nothing escapes us. But 'tis not long before the Instruments stun us, and the Musick is nothing else to our ears but a confused sound that suffers nothing to be distinguish'd. Now how is it

[1] Des Maizeaux, in his Life of Saint Evremond [Works, 1728 I xcix] describes the origin of this letter "Saint Evremond," he says, "composed, about this time, an *Idyll* [*v* "Idylle en Musique", Œuvres 1739 III 430] which he set himself to Musick, and which was sung at Madame Mazarin's, before a great many persons of distinction The Conversation turned afterwards on Plays with Musical Entertainments, and particularly upon Operas, which made then so much noise in France Saint Evremond gave but an indifferent Character of those Compositions, but not having had time to speak all his thoughts about them, he wrote a Discourse upon that subject, which he inscribed to the Duke of Buckingham, who had his share in that Conversation"

possible to avoid being tir'd with the *Recitativo* which has neither the charm of singing nor the agreeable energy of speech? The Soul fatigued by a long attention, wherein it finds nothing to affect it, seeks some relief within it self, and the Mind, which in vain expected to be entertained with the show, either gives way to idle musing or is dissatisfied that it has nothing to employ it In a word the fatigue is so universal, that every one wishes himself out of the house, and the only comfort that is left to the poor spectators, is the hopes that the Show will soon be over

The reason why, commonly, I soon grow weary at Operas, is that I never yet saw any which appear'd not to me despicable, both as to the Contrivance of the subject and the Poetry Now it is in vain to charm the Ears, or gratify the Eyes if the Mind be not satisfied, for my Soul being in better intelligence with my mind than with my senses struggles against the impressions which it may receive, or at least does not give an agreeable consent to them, without which, even the most delightful Objects can never afford me any great pleasure An extravagance set off with Musick, Dances Machines, and fine Scenes, is a pompous piece of folly, but tis still a folly Tho' the embroidery is rich, yet the ground it is wrought upon is such wretched stuff that it offends the sight

There is another thing in Operas so contrary to Nature that I cannot be reconciled to it, and that is the singing of the whole Piece, from beginning to end as if the Persons represented were ridiculously match'd and had agreed to treat in musick both the most common and most important affairs of Life Is it to be imagin'd that a master calls his servant, or sends him on an errand, singing, that one friend imparts a secret to another singing, that men deliber ate in council singing that orders in time of battle

are given, singing; and that men are melodiously killed with swords and darts?[1] This is the downright way to lose the life of Representation, which without doubt is preferable to that of Harmony: for, Harmony ought to be no more than a bare attendant, and the great masters of the Stage have introduc'd it as pleasing, not as necessary, after they have perform'd all that relates to the Subject and Discourse. Nevertheless, our thoughts run more upon the Musician than the Hero in the Opera *Luigi*, *Cavalli*, and *Cesti*, are still present to our imagination.[2] The mind not being able to conceive a Hero that sings, thinks of the Composer that set the song; and I don't question but that in the Operas at the Palace-Royal,[3]

[1] See Saint Evremond's satirical comedy *Les Opéras*, which was never produced and has not been translated into English [Œuvres, 1739 III 299] In it he parodies the custom of singing even the most common-place remark, by introducing a young Woman "who by the reading and singing of Operas, is arrived at that pass, that she never speaks to anybody, but in Metre and Tune"

[2] Opera had been introduced into France from Italy in the middle of the seventeenth century, largely through the encouragement of the Cardinal Mazarin The splendour of the earliest productions made an immediate appeal to the public, and an Academy of Opera was founded by Perrin and Cambert, with the King's permission, in 1669 In consequence of disagreements with his colleagues, with Lully in particular, Cambert came over to England in 1673 to produce French operas in London Of the composers mentioned by Saint Evremond, Francesco Cavalli (1600–1676) the successor of Monteverdi, is the best known He was imported by Mazarin and his "Xerxés" was played before the Court on November 22, 1660 His "Ercole amante", and his "Ariane" had the greatest reputation of any of his pieces Bourdelot, in his "Histoire de la Musique", says of Luigi that "when he arrived in France and heard our musicians, he was no longer able to tolerate his own" Antonio Cesti, an early composer for the theatre, and a contemporary of Cavalli, was born *c* 1620

[3] i e the Palais-Royal, in Paris, where some of the earliest Italian operas had been produced in great state

Lully[1] is an hundred times more thought of than *Theseus* or *Cadmus*

I pretend not, however, to banish all manner of singing from the Stage there are some things which ought to be sung, and others that may be sung without trespassing against reason or decency Vows, Prayers Praises, Sacrifices, and generally all that relates to the service of the Gods, have been sung in all Nations, and in all times, tender and mournful Passions express themselves naturally in a sort of querulous tone the expressions of Love in its birth, the irresolution of a soul toss'd by different motions, are proper matters for Stanzas as Stanzas are for Musick Every one knows that the Chorus was introduc'd upon the Grecian Theatre, and it is not to be denied, but that with equal reason it might be brought upon ours So far, in my opinion, Musick may be allow'd all that belongs to Conversation, all that relates to Intrigues and Affairs all that belongs to Council and Action, is proper for Actors to rehearse, but ridiculous in the mouth of Musicians to sing The Grecians made admirable Tragedies where they had some singing, the Italians and the French make bad ones, where they sing all

Would you know what an Opera is? I'll tell you, that it is an *odd medley of Poetry and Musick, wherein the Poet and Musician, equally confin'd one by the other, take a world of pains to compose a wretched*

[1] Jean Baptiste Lulli (1633–1687) the most celebrated musician and one of the most disagreable characters of Louis XIV's court though not as it is commonly supposed the creator of French Opera the credit for which is shared by Cambert and Perrin He collaborated with Philippe Quinault the dramatist in the operas of Thésee [Theseus] and Cadmus et Hermione produced in 1675 and 167- respectively [v Lully par Henry Prunières Paris n d] Saint Evremond's lively interest in the drama of the country from which he was an exile is remarkable in the intimate knowledge of it he displays throughout this letter

performance. Not but that you may find agreeable Words and very fine Airs in our Operas, but you will more certainly find, at length, a dislike of the Verses, where the genius of the Poet is so cramp't, and be cloy'd with the singing, where the Musician is spent by too long a service

If I thought my self capable of giving counsel to Persons of Quality, who delight in the Theatre, I would advise them to take up their old relish for good Comedies, where Dances and Musick might be introduced That would not, in the least, hurt the Representation The *Prologue* might be sung with an agreeable Accompaniement In the *Intermedes* [1] singing might animate words, that should be as the life of what had been represented After the end of the Play the *Epilogue* might be sung, or some Reflections upon the finest things in the Play, which would fortify the idea, and rivet the impressions they had made upon the Spectators. Thus you might find enough to satisfy both the Senses and the Mind, wanting neither the charms of singing in a bare Representation, nor the beauty of acting in a long continued course of Musick.

It remains that I give you my advice in general for all Comedies, where any singing is used; and that is, to leave to the Poet's discretion the whole management of the Piece The Musick must be made for the words, rather than the Words for the musick The Musician is to follow the Poet's directions; only, in my opinion, *Lulli* is to be exempted, who knows the Passions better, and enters farther into the heart of man, than the Authors themselves *Cambert*,[2] without doubt, hath an excellent genius,

[1] "An entertainment of Musick and Dancing between the Acts, which has no connection with the Play" [note of Des Maizeaux]

[2] Robert Cambert (1628–1677), the pupil of one of Saint Evremond's favourite composers, Chambonnières, who, with

proper for an hundred different sorts of Musick, and all well managed with a just symphony of Voices and Instruments no *Recitativo* is better understood, nor better diversified than his, but as to the nature of the Passions, and the quality of the Sentiments that are to be expressed, he ought to receive from the Authors those lights which *Lulli* can give them, and submit to be directed, when *Lulli*, thro' the strength of his Genius, may justly be allowed to be the director

Before I put an end to my Discourse, I will tell your Grace what a small esteem the Italians have for our Operas, and how great a dislike those of Italy give us The Italians, who apply themselves wholly to the Representation, and take a particular care in expressing things cannot endure that we should give the name of Opera to a mixture of Dances and Musick, which have not a natural relation, or exact connexion with the Subject The French, on the other hand, accustom'd to the beauty of their Entries, the delightfulness of their Airs, and charms of their Symphony, cannot endure the ignorance, or ill use of the Instruments in the Operas of Venice, and are weary of a long *Recitativo*, which becomes tedious for want of variety I cannot properly tell you what this *Recitativo* of theirs is, but I know very well that it is neither singing nor reciting, it is somewhat unknown to the Antients, which may be defined, *an awkward use of Musick and Speech* I confess, I have found things inimitable in the Opera of *Luigi*, both for the expression of the

the Abbé Perrin introduced French Opera on to the stage He was Superintendent of the Queen Mother s Music and Organist at the church of St Honoré Lulli contrived with Mme de Montespan to wrest from him the Directorship of the Academy of Opera and in disgust he came over to England where he died in the enjoyment of the office of Superintendent of Charles II s music

Thoughts, and the charms of the Musick, but the common *Recitativo* was very tiresome, insomuch that the Italians themselves impatiently expected those fine places, which in their opinion came too seldom. I shall in a few words sum up the greatest defects of our Operas: one thinks he is going to a Representation, where nothing will be represented, and expects to see a Comedy, but finds nothing of the spirit of Comedy.

So much I thought I might say concerning the different constitution of Operas. As for the manner of singing, which we in France call *Execution*,[1] I think, without partiality, that no Nation can justly vie with us The Spaniards have admirable pipes, but with their warblings and shakings, they seem to mind nothing in their singing, but to out-rival the Nightingales. The Italian singing is either feign'd, or at least forc'd · for want of knowing exactly the nature or degree of the Passions, they burst out into laughter, rather than sing, when they would express any Joy, if they sigh, you shall hear violent sobs form'd in the throat, and not Sighs which unawares escape from the passion of an amorous heart, instead of a doleful tone, they fall into the loudest Exclamations, the Tears of absence, are with them the downright weeping at a funeral, sadness becomes so sorrowful in their mouths, that they roar rather than complain, and sometimes they express a languishing passion, as a natural fainting Perhaps there may be at present some alteration in their way of singing, and by conversing with us, they may be improved as to the justness of a neat Execution, as we are improved by them, as to the beauties of a stronger and bolder Composition.

I have seen Plays in England, wherein there is a great deal of musick,[2] but to speak my thoughts

[1] "In English Performance" [note of Des Maizeaux]

[2] Saint Evremond nowhere mentions any particular performance of an English play at which he was a spectator In

with discretion, I could not accustom my self to the English singing I came too late to find a relish in that which is so different from all others There is no Nation that affords greater Courage in the men, more Beauty in the women, nor more Wit in both sexes 'Tis impossible to have every thing, and where so many good qualities are so common 'tis no misfortune that a good Taste is a rarity there 'Tis certain that 'tis very rarely to be found but those persons that have it, possess it in as eminent a degree of niceness and perfection, as any in the world, being distinguish'd from the rest of their Nation, either by an exquisite Art, or by a most happy Genius

Solus Gallus cantat, none but the Frenchman sings I will not be so injurious to all other Nations, as to maintain what an Author has publish'd, *Hisparus flet, dolet Italus, Germanus hoat, Pl'arder ululat & solus Gallus cantat* I shall leave these pretty distinctions with the Author, and only beg leave to back my opinion by the authority of *Luigi*, who would not endure that the Italians should pretend to sing his Airs, after he had heard them sung by *Nyert*, *Hilaire*, and the little *Vaterne*[1] On his return to Italy, he made all the Musicians of that Nation his Enemies, by saying openly at *Rome*, as he had said at *Paris*, that to make fine Musick, Italian Airs must come out of a French mouth He made little account of our Songs, except those of *Bossset*, which he admired, as well as the consort of our Violins, our Lutes Harpsichords, and Organs and how would he have been

this passage he may have in mind among other pieces wherein there is a great deal of musick Dryden and Davenant's musical version of The Tempest (1667) Davenant's Macbeth (1673) or Shadwell's ridiculed Psyche (1675)

[1] These were some of the French singers whom Luigi found incomparably better than the Italians [*t note supra*]

charmed with our Flutes, if they had been then in use? It is most certain, that he was much disgusted with the harshness of the greatest Masters of Italy, when he had once heard the sweet touch, and agreeable manner of the French.

I should be too partial, if I insisted only upon our advantages: therefore I must own, that no people have a slower apprehension both for the true sense of Words, and for humouring the thought of the Composer, than the French. There are but few who less understand the quantity, and who with greater difficulty find out the pronunciation; but when, by long study, they have surmounted all these difficulties, and are Masters of what they sing, nothing comes near them. The same thing happens to us in our instrumental Musick, and particularly in Concerts, where we can pretend to nothing very sure or just, till after an infinite number of Rehearsals, but when once we are perfect in them, nothing can be so just and fine. The Italians, for all their profound skill in Musick, bring their Art to our ears without any sweetness. The French, not satisfied to take away from the skill the first harshness that shews the labour of the Composition, find in the beauty of their Performance, as it were a charm for our Souls, and I know not what that touches; which they carry home to the very Heart.

I forgot to speak to your Grace about *Machines*,[1]

[1] This would have been a serious omission, for "Machines", that is to say mechanical effects, played, at one time, the chief parts in operatic productions. In England the tradition of Inigo Jones's superb entertainments was revived after the Restoration, for the operas that had taken the place of his Masques. In France the magnificence of the first Italian operas had been carried to fantastic lengths by the Marquis de Sourdeac who staged the operas of Perrin and Cambert. Of the command performance of Cavalli's "Ercole amante", in the "Théâtre des Machines" in the Tuileries, the "Encyclopédie des gens du monde" says:

so easy it is for man to forget that which he would have laid aside Machines may satisfy the curiosity of ingenious Men, who love Mathematical Inventions, but they'll hardly please persons of good judgment in the Theatre the more they surprize, the more they divert the mind from attending to the Discourse, and the more admirable they are, the less Tenderness and exquisite Sense they leave in us, to be touch'd and charm'd with the Musick The Antients made no use of Machines, but when there was a necessity of bringing in some God, nay, the Poets themselves were generally laughed at for suffering themselves to be reduc'd to that necessity If men love to be at expences, let them lay out their Money upon fine Scenes, the use whereof is more natural and more agreeable than that of Machines Antiquity, which expos'd their Gods, even at the gates and chimney-corners, Antiquity, I say, as vain and credulous as it was, exposed them nevertheless, but very rarely upon the Stage Now the belief of them is gone the Italians in their Operas, have brought the Pagan Gods again into the world, and have not scrupled to amuse men with these ridiculous vanities, only to make their Pieces look great by the introduction of that dazzling and surprizing Wonderful These Stage Deities have long enough abused Italy but

Whole palaces were to be seen descending from the heavens borne up by clouds and in them a hundred people disposed in various groups This same device rose again to the skies and was replaced by another palace which rising out of the earth advanced gradually to the topmost boxes The sumptuous costumes the beauty of the singing the exact and brilliant performance of two hundred musicians were a spectacle worthy of the occasion for which it had been composed The Marquis de Sourdeac who had devoted himself to such things with passion since his youth conceived these marvellous machines was present during their construction and supervised the working of them himself [Quoted in French in Pougin Les Vrais Createurs de l'Opera français Perrin et Cambert Paris 1881]

the People there being happily undeceived at last, are disgusted with those very Gods they were so fond of before, and have return'd to Plays, which, in truth, cannot pretend to the same exactness, but are not so fabulous, and which with a little indulgence, may pass well enough with men of sense.

It hath happen'd with us as to our Gods and Machines, what happens with the Germans as to our Modes and Fashions: we now take up what the Italians have laid aside; and as if we would atone for the fault of being prevented in the invention, we run extravagantly into a Custom which they brought up preposterously. In truth, we cover the Earth with Deities, and make them dance in troops, whereas they made them descend with discretion, and on the most important occasions. As *Ariosto* carried too far the Wonderful of Poetry,[1] by a vain profusion of Fables, so we strain even Fable it self by a confused assembly of Gods, Shepherds, Heroes, Enchanters, Apparitions, Furies, and Devils. I admire *Lulli*, as well for the diversion of Dances, as for what concerns the Voices and Instruments, but the constitution of our Operas must appear very extravagant to those who are true Judges of the Probable and the Wonderful

Nevertheless, a man runs a risk of having his Judgment call'd in question, if he dares declare his good taste; and I advise others, when they hear any discourse of Operas, to keep their knowledge a secret to themselves. For my own part, who am past the age and time of signalizing my self in the world by the invention of Modes, and the merit of new Fancies, I am resolv'd to strike in with good Sense, and to follow Reason tho' in disgrace, with as much zeal, as if it were still in as great vogue as formerly. That which vexes me most at this our fondness for Operas, is that they tend directly to ruin

[1] In his "Orlando Furioso"

the finest thing we have, I mean *Tragedy* than which nothing is more proper to elevate the Soul, or more capable to form the Mind

After this long Discourse, let us conclude, that the constitution of our Operas cannot be more faulty than it is But it is to be acknowledg'd at the same time, that no man can perform better than *Lulli*, upon an ill conceiv'd Subject, and that it is not easy to out-do *Quinault* in what belongs to his part [1]

LETTER 55 [Works 1728 II 172]

56

TO THE COMTE D'OLONNE

[1679]

I know not why you should admire my Verses [2] since I don t admire them my self, for I must inform you, that in the opinion of a celebrated master, in Poetry,[3] a Poet is always the most affected with his own Compositions As for my self, I acknowledge

[1] For many of the criticisms advanced by Saint Evremond in this letter *v* Dryden s Preface to Albion and Albanius An Opera' 1685

[2] These verses entitled Epitre au Roi (Arbitre des mortels je connois ta puissance) are not printed in the English translations [*i* Œuvres 1739 IV 150] Des Maizeaux records the occasion of their composition After the Peace of Nimeguen [1678] Saint Evremond wrote an *Epistle* in Verse to the King wherein he indirectly ask d leave to return to his native Country but it came to nothing

[3] Des Maizeaux in a footnote mentions Aristotle but it is not clear to which of his works he is referring It is possible that the opinion quoted in the text is by a commentator possibly Rapin But cf Aristotle Poetics XVII It is necessary that the poet should form the plots in such a manner that he may as much as possible place the matter before his own eyes thus the poet would see every thing in the clearest light and would best discern what is becoming and what is repugnant

abundance of Faults in mine, which I might correct, if exactness were not extremely troublesome to my humour, and did not take up more time than a person of my Age can spare. Besides, I have another excuse, which, if I am not mistaken, you will allow of: Essays are seldom Master-pieces, and the Praises I bestow upon the King, being the first true and sincere I ever writ, it can be no wonder I had no better success. As for those you bestow upon me, they are an ingenious Irony, of which rhetorical Figure, I was formerly so great a Master, that the Mareschal *de Clerembaut* [1] thought no body but my self capable to vie with you in it. You ought not to have employ'd it against a man who has lost the use of it; and who is so entirely your humble servant as I am You see I am pretty well upon my guard against Ridicule, and yet in spite of all my precautions, I cannot forbear to indulge my self in the praises you give me upon the score of my Taste. 'Tis your interest it shou'd be good, true, and delicate, for the idea of yours, which I always preserve by me, is the rule of mine.

That miracle of Beauty[2] which I formerly saw at Bourbon,[3] is the same miracle of Beauty which I

[1] The Comte de Pallau, Mareschal de Clerembaut, an old army friend, whose son was befriended by Ninon de Lanclos in her old age

[2] "The Duchesse Mazarin" [note of Des Maizeaux]

[3] The Baths of Bourbon L'Archambaut in the department of Allier are probably intended, rather than those at Bourbon Lancy (Saône-et-Loire) or at Bourbonne (Haute-Marne) The reputation of the first-named is very ancient, the Bourbons taking their name from the castle overlooking the town. Evelyn, the diarist, was there in September 1644 while the Queen of England was taking a cure "In the midst of the streets, he notes, are some baths of medicinal waters, some of them excessive hot, but nothing so neatly walled and adorned as ours in Somersetshire [Bath?] After dinner, I went to see the St Chapelle, a prime place of devotion

daily see at London Some additional years have given her more wit, and taken away none of her charms

Fair Eyes so sweetly charming and divine
That cause such transports where you shine
Oh! ne'er to grief your chrystal treasures pay
Your pearls on grief are thrown away
Tears from those orbs let no misfortunes move
So rich a tribute's only due to Love

As for the wicked expedients you advise me to, I am not in a condition to practise them, neither is she in humour to suffer them If I must sit up all night, they tell me I have not yet seen forty If I am to take a long journey in the wind and rain, what a noble constitution has Monsieur *de Saint Evremond*! But if I lay my head close to hers, smell her hair, or kiss the tip of her ear, I am presently asked whether I knew Madame *Gabrielle*,[1] and if I made my court to *Marie de Medicis*?[1] But my Paper fails me Place me I pray, among your solid Friends, immediately after Monsieur *de Canaples* The miracle of love presents her service to you

LETTER 56 [Works 1728 II 258]

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[1] The mistress and wife respectively of Henry IV of France Gabrielle d Estrees died in 1599 at the age of 26 Marie de Medici in 1642 at the age of 69 Saint Evremond of course had known the latter before his exile

[2] Alphonse de Crequi Comte and Marquis de Canaples (died 1711) brother of the Mareschal de Crequi He was relieved of his posts in France on the score of incompetence and in 1672 came over to England where he was welcomed at Charles II s court [*v* Letters 120 121]

57

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1680]

Your Life, my Dearest, has been so illustrious, that it must continue so till the end. Do not let Monsieur *de la Rochefoucauld's Hell*[1] alarm you, 'twas a premeditated Hell, out of which he desired to make an Epigram Therefore speak boldly of Love, and may the word Age never pass your lips. Your letter is so full of Wit, that there is not even a suggestion in it of the onset of old-age. How ungrateful you are to be ashamed to speak of Love, to which both your reputation and happiness are owing. For, after all, (fair keeper of the privy purse),[2] your reputation for Honesty is principally maintained by your resistance to lovers who might willingly have helped themselves to your friends' pockets. Confess all your passions, in order that your vittues may appear worthy too. And yet you have expressed but half your nature, nothing is so admirable as the side of it which concerns itself with your friends; nothing so tedious as that wherein your lovers are concerned. In a few verses I would express the whole of you; and here they are, compounded of all the virtues you possess or ever have possessed

When faithless Venus holds you in her arms,
You with your Lovers share th' uncertain Charms
Constant in Friendship, you design to shew
That lasting merits with that Virtue go

[1] "L'Enfer des Femmes, c'est la vieillesse" [For a woman, Hell is old age] This maxim appeared for the first time in a supplement to La Rochefoucauld's "Maximes", published by Barbin in 1693

[2] This quip is a delicate reminder to Ninon that she still owed Saint Evremond a considerable sum of money

When tho your Subjects still your Lovers blame
The latest object of your restless Flame
Your Friends the Charms of your Good Faith proclaim
Sometimes you borrow Trojan Helen's Grace
Her soft Desires the Magic of her Face,
Sometimes your steadfast Loyalty we praise
When Roman Virtue every action sways
Tho a stern Sister you would still engage
To increase the Convent's modest Heritage
Yet in the World we'd rather trust our share
To you than to a Holy Sister's care

Do not be surprised at the inconsistency!

L'indulgente et sage Nature
A formé l'ame de Niron
De la volupté d'Epicure
Et de la vertu de Caton[1]

LETTER 57 [Translated for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 IV 142]

58

TO THE EARL OF SAINT ALBANS
FRIENDSHIP WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP

[1680]

I was a long while of opinion, that Women have no inconsiderable advantage over us, in that we are loved only by the less wise, and that the wisest of Men thought fit to love them all his life time The politest Men in Antiquity, the most virtuous, and the greatest, I mean *Alcibiades*, *Agesilaus*, and *Alexander*, were acquainted with other charms besides those of the Ladies The most magnanimous among the Romans, *Scipio*, the honour of a Republick, which can be reproach'd with nothing, but her ingratitude

[1] The meaning of this epigram is so obvious that I have not ventured to translate it

[2] The Duchesse Mazarin caus'd this Piece to be printed at London in 1681 and put this roguish Title to it [note of Des Maizeaux]

towards him; *Scipio*, I say, is commended for continency, which was no other than his want of taste, or sensibility for the Fair. *Caesar*, whose name alone is a Panegyrick, shew'd no averseness to any sort of Love. *Solomon* was altogether unacquainted with such various likings and disgusts: for he wholly devoted himself to the Female Sex, being insensible of any other charms but theirs.

'Tis somewhat surprizing, that the politest, the greatest, the best of Men, and the most magnanimous, could forbear the love of Women, and as if this kind of Love was reserv'd for the wise, that *Solomon* made it his principal business of his Life. It is surprizing, I own it, but after due reflection, I find nothing in it that we ought to wonder at. The Polite among the Antients had a great averseness to all manner of subjection: and in the pursuit of all Pleasures, they still retain'd the liberty of passing from one Sex to the other, according to their fancy. The love of Women would have soften'd the courage of Men, the virtue of the good Men had been adulterated by it, and the spirit of the magnanimous might have been weakened: but true Wisdom ran no great danger with the Female Sex. The wise Man, still superior to their weakness, their unsteadiness, and their caprice, can either govern them at his pleasure, or part with them when he thinks convenient. While he beholds others in slavery, and toss'd by an unfortunate Passion, he enjoys a steadiness and calmness, that sooths his pain, and takes off the sense of a thousand disquietudes which are not cured by Reason alone Not but that he may fall into some error, for there's no such thing as constant stability in human nature. but it is not long before he recovers his wandering Judgment, and comes to re-settle his former Tranquillity.

The world has seen an egregious instance of this in *Solomon*, who loved the Fair Sex all his life-time, but differently, according to the different periods of

his Age When young he had all the tenderness of a Lover of which his soft and melting expressions are sufficient proof, and 'tis but reading his *Song* or *Canticle* to be convinc'd of it I must beg pardon for not interpreting it in a mystical sense I shall never be persuaded to believe that *Solomon* intended to make our Saviour *Jesus Christ* speak to his Church with more effeminate sentiments, and more lascivious expressions than *Catullus* used for *Lesbia*, and *Propertius* for *Corinna* in verses more tender than those of *Petrarch* for *Laura* and more gallant than those of *Voiture* for *Beliza* [1] Neither do I think that *Solomon* spoke to a Wife a dear Mistress must undoubtedly be the object of such Love, such Raptures, such Eagerness However, he loved less than he was belov'd, and he knew by experience that the Women were more passionate than the Men This is a truth which even the Holy Scripture has thought fit to confirm for to express the sentiments which *David* and *Jonathan* had one for the other, it says *they loved one another with the Love of a Woman* to denote the tenderest Love

Solomon in the vigour of his Age, shew'd less tenderness and sincerity in his Affections and Amours He made use even of the fame of his Wisdom to make himself belov'd 'Tis by that means he got so much Gold from the Queen of *Sheba*, a Princess so fondly intoxicated with his Wisdom that she left her Kingdom to see a Sage When *Solomon* grew in years, he alter'd *his conduct with the Fair* Having lost the merit of pleasing, he pursued that of obeying He might have commanded and forc'd Love, but would not be beholden for it to Power, and endeavour'd by suppleness and submission to make up his past Endearments Tho' a King tho' a wise Man, he

[1] Vincent Voiture (1598–1648) the prince of the précieux poets whose elegant evaporations scarcely deserve to be classed with the love poems of Catullus Propertius and Petrarch

becomes a slave to his Mistresses in his old Age; being of opinion, that in that melancholy and unfortunate period of our Lives, we ought, as far as possible, to steal away, as it were, from our selves; and that 'tis better for us to give up our selves to the charms of a Beauty that enchants our ills, than to sad Reflections and frightful Imaginations.

I am not ignorant that *Solomon* has been censured for this last conduct but tho' his Reason appear'd weaken'd, he was nevertheless wise with respect to himself He thereby softened his sorrow, sooth'd his pains, diverted the ills he could not overcome, and Wisdom, which could no longer find out means to make him happy, made good use of diversions to render him less miserable. We scarce begin to grow old, but we begin to be displeased with our selves, thro' a disgust of our selves, which secretly grows within us Then our Soul, void of Self-love, is easily filled with the love of external objects; and such of these as would formerly have pleas'd us but indifferently, thro' the resistance they met with from our own sentiments, charm and captivate us thro' our weakness. Hence it comes to pass, that Mistresses dispose of their old Lovers, and Wives of old Husbands, as they please: hence it was that *Syphax* abandon'd himself to the will of *Sophonisba*,[1] and that *Augustus* was govern'd by *Livia*.[2] And not to fetch all my examples from Antiquity, this made Monsieur *de*

[1] Hasdrubal, the Carthaginian general, in order to have Syphax, king of the Numidians, as his ally, married his daughter Sophonisba to him At the defeat of Syphax by Masinissa, she fell into the latter's hands, but Scipio, fearing that she might exercise as powerful an influence over him as she had done over Syphax, ordered him to give her up Whereat Masinissa, to save her from captivity, sent her a cup of poison, which she drank

[2] Livia was the third and last wife of the emperor Augustus, whom she married after he had compelled her husband, Claudius Nero, to divorce her

Senecterre,[1] a person worthy to be named with Kings and Emperors, upon the bare score of being a man of true honour, this I say made that Courtier, who was equally wise, nice, and polite, supinely give way to the fondness of a young Woman he had married in his latter days *If you knew*, said he to his Friends *the condition of a person of my Age, who has nothing but himself to entertain in his Solitude, you would not wonder at my resolution to have a Companion that pleased me, let the purchase cost what it will* For my part, I never blamed him for it and indeed, how can one censure what *Solomon* heretofore, and the Mareschal *d'Estrees*[2] of late years have authoriz'd by their examples? However in spite of all these Authorities, I should have a great esteem for a man who should have strength enough to preserve the taste of Liberty to the end of his Life

Not that a full independency is always to be commended for, such free and disengaged Gentlemen, often become indifferent and ungrateful Let us avoid the two extremes of absolute Subjection, and entire Freedom, and content our selves with an easy and honourable intercourse, as agreeable to our Friends as to our selves If any thing more is required of me than a hearty concern, and sincere endeavours, for the

[1] Henri de Saint Nectaire Marquis de la Ferte Nabert He was ambassador of France at London and at Rome and acted as a spy for Richelieu He died in 1662 at the age of 89 Unlike Saint Evremond he was remarkable in his old age for his cleanliness When he was nearly 80 years old he married the widow of Timoleon de Bauves Sieur de Contenaut The latter seems to have resembled the Duchesse Mazarin's husband in the peculiar behaviour he showed to his wife waking her in the middle of the night to accuse her of infidelity and taking away her nightgown until she had confessed her non existent sins [*v* Historiettes de Tallemant des Reaux Paris 1861 I 212 and VI 13]

Saint Evremond's old friend François Hannibal Marquis de Cœuvres married in 1664 when he was 91 years old his third wife Gabrielle de Longueval [*v* note p 55]

interest of those I love; any thing more than my small assistance, as weak as 'tis, when they are in distress; or more than discretion in conversation, and secrecy in affairs of moment, let them seek for a Friend elsewhere; for I can afford them no more.

Violent Passions are unequal, and portend the distraction of change. In Love, we must leave those excesses for the *Alexander's* and the *Cyrus's* of our *Romances:* and in Friendship, for the *Orestes* and *Pylades* of our *Plays*. These are things we read, and see represented, which are not to be found in the commerce and practice of the world. And indeed, 'tis well they are not; for they would produce very extravagant adventures

What did *Orestes* ever do, that great and illustrious example of Friendship? what did he ever do, I say, that ought not to strike us with horror? He kill'd his own Mother, murder'd *Pyrrhus*, and fell into such strange convulsions of fury, that it cost some Players their Lives, who endeavour'd to top his Character [1] Let us carefully observe the nature of those entire Friendships, and Engagements which are so cry'd up, and we shall find them to be made up of sullen black Melancholy, the chief ingredient in the composition of all Man-haters. And indeed, the reducing oneself to love but one Person, is a disposition to hate all the rest: and what is taken for an admirable virtue with respect to a private person, is a great crime towards all the world He that makes us lose the conversation of the rest of mankind, by deserting them as he has done, makes us lose more than he is worth, let his merit be never so great. Let us pretend to as great

[1] Saint Evremond is here referring to the legend that Montfleury, the tragedian, died from overstraining as Orestes in Racine's "Andromaque" It is said that the tragedian Mondory, the creator of Corneille's "Cid", died from the same cause while playing the part of Herod in Tristan L'Hermite's "Marianne"

disinterestedness as we please, let us confine all our desires to the purity and excellence of our Passion, conceiving no good but what results from it yet we shall languish and pine in this refined Friendship unless we draw from general Society, those conveniencies and delights that animate private Conversation

The Union of two Persons entirely devoted to one another that sublime union wants yet the assistance of foreign things to excite the taste of Pleasure, and the sense of Joy Notwithstanding all the boasted sympathy between them the participation of Counsels and Secrets, it will hardly yield satisfaction in proportion to the vexation and uneasiness it occasions 'Tis in the intercourse of the world, and amongst diversions and business, that the most agreeable and profitable Friendships are form'd I set a greater value upon the correspondence between the Mareschal *d Estrées* and Monsieur *de Senetterre*, who liv'd fifty years at Court in an uninterrupted intimacy, I more esteem the confidence the Prince *de Turenne* had in the Marquis *de Rusigny*, for forty years together than those Friendships so often instanc'd and never practis'd amongst men As nothing contributes more to the happiness of Life than Friendship, so nothing disturbs its repose so much as Friends, if we have not judgment enough to chuse them well Importunate friends make us wish they were indifferent, so they were more agreeable The morose give us more uneasiness by their humour, than they do us good by their services The imperious tyrannize over us we must hate whatever they do be it never so agreeable, we must love what they love tho we think it nauseous and displeasing We must do violence to our Nature, enslave our Judgment, renounce our Taste, and under the fair name of *Complaisance*, pay a general submission to all they think fit to impose upon us with authority Jealous friends are an insupportable

plague: they hate all Advice that is not of their own giving: and as they are angry at all the good that happens to us without their interposition, so they rejoice at all the ill that befalls us by following the directions of others. There are men in the world, that make profession of Friendship, and value themselves upon taking our parts at random, and upon all occasions: and such vain Friends serve for nothing else but to incense the world against us by their imprudent contests. There are others that justify us when nobody accuses us, who by their indiscreet zeal, bring us into affairs where we had nothing to do; and draw inconveniences upon us, which we would willingly avoid. Let who please be contented with such Friends As for me, I am not satisfy'd with a man's good intention, that proves to my prejudice: I would have it attended with Discretion and Prudence. A man's Affection makes me no amends for the mischief his Rashness has done me. I return him thanks for his impertinent zeal, and advise him to seek to be applauded for it amongst Fools. If the light of the understanding does not guide the motions of the heart, Friends are more apt to vex and disquiet, than to please us, and more capable to hurt, than to serve us.

In the mean time, we hear nothing talk'd of but the Heart, in all the discourses about Love and Friendship. Poets become troublesome upon this theme, Lovers tedious, and Friends ridiculous We see nothing in our Plays but King's Daughters yield the Heart, but refuse the Hand; or Princesses that give the Hand, but cannot consent to yield the Heart. Lovers become nauseous by perpetually demanding the sincerity of the Heart, and Friends setting up for affected Precisians challenge it for their due as well as Lovers This betrays a very imperfect knowledge of the nature of it: whereas for a little irregular heat, for some unequal and uncertain tenderness it may

sometimes afford there's no caprice, ingratitude, and infidelity, but we ought to apprehend from it

Begging pardon of the whimsies of Poets, and imaginations of Painters, we call Love very improperly *blind* Love is a Passion of which the heart makes generally an ill use The Heart is a blind guide which leads us into all our errors 'Tis that which prefers a fool before a man of sense, that makes us dote on ugly Objects and disown very lovely ones, that bestows it self on the most deform'd, and refuses it self to the most beautiful 'Tis that, in short, that sets *Jocorde's* friend a rambling, thro' the jealousy of a Dwarf [1]

'Tis that which disorders the most regular, that bereaves the reserved and discreet of their Virtue and undermines the Devotion of the prettest saints among the fair Sex It pays as little regard to rules in a Convent, as to duty in a private Family, 'tis faithless to a Husband, but much more so to a Lover it discomposes the former and distracts the latter It acts without either council or knowledge it rebels against Reason, that should be the guide, and being secretly moved by hidden springs it does not conceive, it bestows and withdraws its affections without reason, engages it self without design, breaks off without observing any decorum, and in short, occasions strange follies, that make a great deal of noise in the world and equally disgrace all the parties concern'd in them

This is the common fate of Love and Friendship grounded on the Heart As for those just and reasonable ties over ruled by Judgment there's no rupture to be apprehended for either they last for life, or

[1] This sentence is a free translation of two lines of doggerel verse in the French text which refer to La Fontaine's Tale of Joconde —

C'est lui qui par un Nain a fait courir le monde
A l'ami de Joconde

insensibly wear off with discretion and decency. It is certain that Nature has placed in our hearts a Loving Faculty, (if I may so speak) some secret principle of Affection, some hidden stock of Tenderness, which opens and communicates it self in time But the use of it has been no farther receiv'd and authoriz'd amongst men, than as it may render life more easy and happy. 'Tis upon this score that *Epictetus* recommended it so much to his Disciples: That *Cicero* exhorts us to it by arguments, and invites us to it by several examples. That *Seneca*, as stern and rigid as he is, becomes soft and tender as soon as he begins to speak of Friendship · That *Montaigne* refines upon *Seneca* in more lively expressions: and that *Gassendus* sets forth the advantages of that Virtue, and as far as in him lies, disposes his Readers to acquire them.

All men of sense, honesty, and good breeding, agree with Philosophers, upon this foundation, that *Friendship* ought to contribute more than any thing besides to our happiness. And indeed, Man would hardly depart from himself, as it were, upon any account whatever, to unite himself to another, if he did not find more pleasure in this union, than in the first sentiments of self-love. The whole world affords nothing more precious and valuable than the Friendship of wise men. That of others, as it is boisterous and disorderly, so it disturbs the peace of publick Society, and the pleasures of private Conversations. 'Tis a savage Friendship, which reason disowns, and which we could wish to be the lot of our enemies, to be reveng'd of them for their hatred to us

But let Friends be never so sincere and regular, 'tis yet inconvenient to have too many of them. If our cares are divided into many streams and channels, we can neither attend our own concerns, nor those of other men, with the application they deserve. for when the soul diffuses it self undistinguishably upon all objects, our Affections are so distracted, that they

properly fix upon nothing Let us live for a few that live for us let us seek an easy and agreeable Conversation, with every body, and our private advantages with those that can promote our interest

LETTER 58 [Works 1728 II 261]

59

TO MONSIEUR JUSTEL [1]

[1681]

SIR

I am overjoy'd to see you in England the conversation of so knowing, and so inquisitive a man as your self, will afford me no little satisfaction but give me leave not to approve the resolution you have taken to quit France, so long as I see you entertain so tender and so fond a remembrance of that Kingdom As often as I see you doleful and desolate wishing for Paris on the banks of our Thames you put me in mind of the poor Israelites bewailing their beloved Jerusalem

[1] Henri Justel (1620–1693) LL D of Oxford son of Christopher Justel a distinguished authority on canon law left France of his own accord in October 1681 before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes compelled his fellow protestants to leave four years later He came over to England and was made librarian at Saint James Palace where he was accustomed to meet the group of passionate antiquaries and scholars whom Evelyn names frequently in his Diary Evelyn speaks of him as the great and knowing virtuoso and records on March 13 1690/1 a visit to the Library at Saint James in which that learned man had put the MSS (which were in good number) into excellent order they having lain neglected for many years *v* Nouvelles de la Republique de Lettres March 1684 Monsieur Justel who now resides in London and who is so enquiring so learned so well informed in all that concerns the Republick of Letters and so well disposed to contribute his information will tell us many things that will do much honour to this Journal

on the banks of Euphrates. Either live happy in England, with the enjoyment of full Liberty of Conscience, or make shift to bear small hardships, as to Religion, in your own Country, to enjoy there all the conveniences of life.

Is it possible that Images, Ornaments, small Ceremonies; that little Novelties, which you account superstitious, and we religious, that certain Questions, debated with more subtlety for the reputation of the learned Disputants, than knowledge and candour for our edification. is it possible, in short, that differences, either so inconsiderable, or so ill grounded, should disturb the tranquillity of Nations, and occasion the greatest misfortunes that befall men? 'Tis a commendable thing, I confess, to *worship God in Spirit and Truth*; that first Being, that supreme Intelligence, deserves our most purify'd and exalted speculations: but when we endeavour to discharge our souls from all commerce with our senses, can we assure our selves that an abstracted understanding will not lose it self in wandering thoughts, and lead us into more Extravagancies, than it will discover Truths? Whence think you came all the absurdities of so many Sects, but from deep meditations, wherein the mind, after its dozing and dreaming, meets with nothing but its own imaginations?

Lay aside, Sir, your peevish and stubborn abhorrence of our Images: Images, in a manner, fix what's so hard to be settled, the Mind Besides, as nothing is more natural to man than imitation; so, of all imitations, none is so lawful as that of a Picture, that represents to us what we ought to worship The idea of virtuous persons, creates in us a love of their Virtues, and excites within us a just desire to attain that perfection which they arrived to. There are emulations of sanctity, as well as jealousies of glory: and if a Picture of *Alexander* animated the ambition of *Caesar* with desire of conquering the World; the

Images of our Saints may surely kindle in us the ardour of their zeal, and inspire us with that happy violence that ravishes Heaven

Every one knows that *Numa* prohibited all manner of Images in the Temples of the Romans, and his law was religiously observ'd for a good while but it was afterwards thought fit to return to Nature, which can hardly forbear the representation of Objects, when the Objects themselves are absent, and the Writings of that Legislator having by chance, been found in his sepulchre it was judg'd more proper to burn them than to take them up again with the dryness of his first Institutions The Fathers of the Church have attack'd nothing so fiercely among the Heathens as figures and images, which they called *Gods of wood and stone painted Deities, vain contrivances of fancy, impious handy works of men* 'Tis true, that Heathenism was scarce suppress'd and Christian Religion settled when the use of representations tho formerly so much exclaim'd against was resumed and a great Council which was held some time after, order'd them to be reverenc'd [1]

I own that the *Old Testament* did not allow the forming any thing that look'd like the resemblance of God The almighty Being had drawn himself in the great work of the Universe The Heavens, the Sun the Stars, the Elements, were the images of his immensity and power, the wonderful Order of Nature express'd his wisdom to us our Understanding, which is desirous to know every thing found in it self a kind of idea of his infinite intelligence and this was all that could be imagined of a GOD, who discover'd himself to Men no other way but by his works But the case is alter'd under the dispensation of the

[1] The second Council of Nice held in the year 787 by the intrigues of the Empress Irene [note of Des Maizeaux] Des Maizeaux of course means the Council of Nicea (in Asia Minor) against Iconoclasm

New Testament. Since God made himself Man for our redemption, we may lawfully make to our selves Images of him, whereby we may be exalted to acknowledge his goodness and love. And indeed, if they were condemned as *Heretecks* who deny'd his Humanity, is it not a strange absurdity to call us *Idolaters*, for loving to see it represented? We are commanded ever to have his Passion in our thoughts, always to meditate on his Sufferings, and yet some, it seems, would make it criminal for us, the having of Images that keep up the remembrance of them. They would have the image of his Death to be ever present to our mind, and yet will not allow any before our eyes.

Your aversion for the Ornaments of our Priests, and of our Churches, has no better foundation You know, Sir, that God himself condescended to ordain even the Fringe that belonged to the habit of the High-Priest Our Pontifical Habits come far short of those used in the Jewish œconomy, and you would hardly forgive our Bishops, should they officiate at Mass with the fine ornaments of a *Breast-plate* and *little Bells*. As for the pomp of our Churches, you have reason to call it vain, if you compare it to the solid magnificence of the Temple of *Solomon*, in which Gold and Silver might have been used instead of Stone, towards the rearing up of that sumptuous structure. Nor is your austerity less wild in the silencing our Musick, than in condemning our Images. You ought to remember that *David* recommended nothing so earnestly to the Jews, as the celebrating of the Praises of the Almighty with all sorts of instruments. Musick in Churches exalts the Soul, purifies the Mind, moves the Heart, inspires and raises Devotion

When a Mystery or a Miracle comes in question, you will admit of nothing but Sense and Reason: but in natural things, that conduce to Devotion, Sense

and Reason are your enemies There you ascribe all to Nature here to Grace, there we can alledge nothing supernatural but you laugh at it here we offer nothing human to you, but you think it profane and impious

Divisions and Controversies have disturbed the peace of mankind but too long Agree with us about Ceremonies lawfully establish d, and we will join with you in exclaiming against Abuses that have crept in As for instance, against base interest sordid gain, and snares laid either for the weakness of women or the simplicity of superstitious and credulous men Let them endeavour to grow pure who are reproach'd with Corruption, let them who have the vanity to think themselves pure, bear with small insensible alterations, to which human nature is led by necessity Let not on the one hand, a Roman Catholick be destroy d as an *Idolater*, nor, on the other, a Protestant burnt as a *Heretick* Nothing is more reasonable, than for a man to adore what he believes to be *God*, nor any thing less criminal than not to adore what he looks upon to be a bare *Sign*, and I cannot imagine how this different way of believing could be the occasion of so much barbarity in a Religion altogether founded upon Love and Charity If these are the effects of zeal I'd fain know what those of fury and madness can be?

One part of the Fathers has stuck to the literal sense of these words *This is my Body* the other has taken them in a figurative sense, in a Country where almost every thing was spoken in figures The truth of what I say is most evidently prov d by the Books of Monsieur *Arnauld* and Monsieur *Claude*,[1] wherein as soon as Monsieur *Arnauld* brings in a passage out of any of the Fathers, all the wit and dexterity of Monsieur *Claude* are scarce able to evade it and when the latter instances in another that favours his Opinion all the force and vehemence of Monsieur *Arnauld* cannot

[1] [i Letter 29]

overthrow the argument of Monsieur *Claude* This diversity of opinion is manifest among the Fathers, and 'tis but having either a moderate penetration, to be sensible of it, or a little sincerity to own it. Nevertheless, Sir, this difference did not break the communion of the Church; and all those Fathers went religiously together to receive the blessings that are promis'd us in that Sacrament.

You'll say, that 'tis difficult to agree with us upon the *existence of a Body without either Form or Extension*: but is it an easy matter to take up with *your spiritual eating it*, with that *Faith which really eats the Substance of this same Body?* The difficulty is great on both sides; and a miracle is necessary to support your Opinion, as well as ours. Therefore suffer us to enjoy the belief of an unconceivable Mystery, and we will allow you the strange medley of Faith and Reason, which cannot be either explain'd by you, or comprehended by others. Let every one stick to his own Doctrine as he thinks fit; but let us agree in the use of the Sacrament This was the practice of the Fathers, why should not we follow their example now a-days?

The article of *Adoration* ought not to be an obstacle to it, since true *Adoration* is an inward act, dependent on you and without the intention of your mind, and the motion of your heart, for all your kneeling down, you adore nothing. If kneeling down were worshipping, Children would be Idolaters in England, for asking blessing of their Parents. In like manner a Lover who falls at his Mistress's feet, would perform an act of Idolatry, and the Spaniards, whose bows are a kind of kneeling down, would at least be profane. 'Tis thro' a refining upon your Notions, that Quakers pull off their hats neither to Princes nor Magistrates, upon an apprehension of communicating to a Creature the honour which is only due to the Creator It is strange, that your Ministers who make open war

against Superstition, should themselves run into a practice more superstitious than that which they ascribe to the most ignorant Roman Catholicks For not to pay a due honour, thro' an ill grounded scruple of religion, is more inexcusable than to over do it, thro mistaken zeal

Had I been in the place of the Reformed in France I would have receiv d the Bishop of *Condom s* Book [1] with all the favour imaginable, and having return'd that Prelate thanks for his insinuating overtures I would have begg d of him to have furnish d me with a Catholick Religion purg d from errors and agreeable to his *Exposition of the Catholick Faith* I confess he would not have found it in Italy Spain, or Portugal but he might have procur'd it to you in France free from the Superstitions of the multitude, and the inspirations of foreigners, regulated with equal wisdom and piety by our Laws, and maintain'd with resolution by our Parliaments In such a case if you apprehend the power of the Pope the Liberties of the Gallican Church will screen you against it there His Holiness will neither be infallible nor sovereign umpire of your faith he will neither dispose of the Dominions of Princes nor of the Kingdoms of Heaven at his pleasure in such a case, if you become Roman, so far as with lawful submission, to respect his Character and Dignity it will be sufficient for you to be a Frenchman not to dread his Jurisdiction

But if the love of Separation still possesses you, and you cannot in the least discharge your self from the Opinions that are grown habitual with you do not complain of what is tal en from you as an injustice but rather be thankful for what is left you, as a favour

[1] Bossuet who was elevated to the see of Meaux in the year of this letter had published his Exposition de la Foi catholique in 1671 while he was bishop of Condom to which Justel had replied in An Answer to the Bishop of Condom s Book translated Dublin 1676

Sullenness, murmuring, and opposition, will rather hurt than serve your Party. whereas a more respectful behaviour, and a management of your interest with more discretion than violence, might prevent the design of your ruin, if any such thing were resolv'd on Controversies do but exasperate those in power: and things are now at such a pass, that you have more need of discreet Leaders, than good Writers to preserve you. Your Fore-fathers employ'd all their talents and industry to have Privileges granted them, now your skill must be employ'd to prevent their being taken away from you. The first Settlement of the Protestants was owing to Daringness, Vigour, and Resolution: but nothing now can maintain you, but Affection, Loyalty, and Submission; and such as would be destroy'd as Rebels, may be suffered as dutiful Subjects. In short, Sir, if your Religion be peaceable and quiet, in which you have nothing but your salvation in view, it is to be hoped that her modest and pious exercises will not be disturbed. But if, jealous and quarrelsome, she attacks the establish'd Religion, and censures and condemns the most innocent things, I will not be answerable for a long indulgence towards the indiscretion of a stranger, both unjust and peevish in her corrections.

One of the chief points of discretion, and the most recommended, is, in all Countries to reverence the Religion of the Prince: to condemn the Religion of the Sovereign, is to condemn the Sovereign himself at the same time. An English Roman Catholick, who in his discourse or writings calls the Church of England *Heretical*, treats the King of England as an *Heretick*, and insults him in his own dominions. Likewise, a Protestant in France, who charges the Catholick Religion with *Idolatry*, does by a necessary consequence accuse the King of being an *Idolater*: which the Heathen Emperors themselves could not bear. I think nothing is more unjust, than to persecute a man

for his belief, but nothing appears more foolish to me, than for a man to draw persecution upon himself

Be rul d by me, Sir, and peaceably enjoy whatever exercise you may be allow'd, and be persuaded that Princes have as much right to the external of Religion, as subjects have over the inward recesses of their Consciences

If you duly consider this truth you will not account an injury the pulling down a Protestant Church in *Languedoc* but reckon it as a favour that that of *Charenton* stands The fury of opinions, and the obstinacy of parties, are not for a wise man like your self your honour and zeal are set above all manner of reflection, by what you have already suffered, and you could not do better, than to go and fix at Paris a wandering and strolling Religion, which you have dragg d long enough from Country to Country I know very well that considering the humour you are in at present it would be labour lost to exhort you to renounce it altogether an Opinion that becomes as it were natural, by being form d of the first impressions receiv d in our infancy, the fondness a man has for antient Customs, the difficulty he finds to quit a Belief he was bred in, to embrace another which he always oppos d a niceness of honour, and a mistaken notion of constancy, are chains which you will not break easily but then leave your Children that free choice, which your old engagements will not suffer you to enjoy You complain of the Edict, which obliges them to chuse a Religion at seven years of age and this in my opinion is the greatest favour that could be done them for thereby they are restor'd to their Country, which you robb d them of, they are reinstated in the bosom of the Commonwealth, from whence you drew them and they resume their birth rights to Honours and Dignities from which vou excluded them Do not envy them Sir those advantages you have neglected and keeping to your self

your Opinions and Misfortunes, leave Providence to take care of their Religion and fortune.

What father does not endeavour to possess his children with a zeal for his Party, as well as his Religion? And how can any man tell what will be the result of this zeal, whether it will turn to fury or piety? whether it will produce crimes or virtues? In this uncertainty, Sir, resign all to the disposal of a Law, which has no other end than the publick good, and the particular advantages of your families. And indeed, is it not better to receive one's Religion from the Laws of one's Country, than either from the liberty of one's fancy, or the animosity of a faction a man happens to be engag'd in, than to make it the first article of Faith, to hate the *Papists*, as you unjustly call us? Be wise and discreet, tho' the passionate should call you lukewarm for it; it becomes you to spend in peace the remainder of your days. God Almighty will reward you for your patience; for he loves the wisdom he inspires, but cannot endure indiscreet zeal, which either occasions, or foolishly draws a man into trouble.

LETTER 59 [Works, 1728 II 271]

60

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1682]

. . . *Pretty*[1] is quite well, but as he is a Bird of good birth, and assuredly of good origin, he modestly complains of being abandoned to a maid-servant when he leaves the delicate hands of Mademoiselle *Sylvestre*[2] That, however is not his chief complaint: his Mistress is no more to be seen, and he can longer fly after her,

[1] The Duchess's parrot

[2] A protestant refugee, and the daughter of Dr Sylvestre, the friend of Saint Evremond, and co-editor of his works

or follow in her steps with his little feet—that's his trouble! Nothing is neglected to console him, and he is given tea every morning, but it is not on your bed, he has his beef at dinner regularly, but it is not at your table Nothing can comfort him in his affliction but the hope of your return

My first visit is to *Pretty*, my second to the hens, who are certainly the best behaved I have ever seen They prefer an old cock, all covered with scars, a lame veteran, who could find a home among the *Pensioners* at Newmarket, to a young Gallant, with the finest comb and the finest tail in the world I needs must be content with my position such as it is though, if I had my choice, I would rather be an old cock among those virtuous hens than an old man among the ladies This consideration makes me visit your hens twice a day, when it is my fancy, so to speak, to give myself the nature and happiness of a cock He struts about with extraordinary solemnity, glorying in the respect paid to him, and thoroughly pleased with himself We have no word in our language that fitly expresses this solemn and composed joy, diffused all over him, the Spanish *Ufano* [1] would be exactly right but I do not know if Mr *Pussy* would allow it to be used for anyone but himself

If you give me any commission besides the one I have, of seeing to your fowls, there is nobody in the world who will fulfill it more punctually than myself My monkey grows thinner than I could wish and

[1] i e a mixture of arrogance and contentment
Monkeys were the most fashionable pets at this time Cf Rochester s A Letter from Artemisa in the Town to Cloe in the Country [Poems 1696 p 71]

She to the Window runs where she had spy d
Her much esteem d dear Friend the Monkey ty d
The dirty chatt ring Monster she embrac d
And made it this fine tender speech at last
Kiss me thou curious Miniature of Man
How odd thou art how pretty how japan &c

if it had not been for my devotion to her, she were dead long ago.

LETTER 60. [Translated, omitting introductory verses, for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 IV 175]

61

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1683]

Not a day passes but points to a modification of the kindnesses you have shewn me. I look for the cause of it in my self, but cannot find it Be so gracious as to tell me, for I believe I shall be less miserable when I have learnt the cause of my disgrace. It is no longer question of a *confounded old man*, whom you once playfully honoured with that epithet, but of an *old scoundrel*, whose deplorable conduct is based on nothing but the effects of malicious insinuation.

That, Madam, is the reputation that I hold in your opinion. Spitefulness has its secret pleasures; another might have enjoyed them in place of the pain, which a tender concern for all that affects you has brought upon me. Had it been in my power to remain indifferent, I should have enjoyed a sweet and easy freedom of mind. *That accomodating and agreeable friendship*, for which you were always reproaching me, would have spared me much uneasiness and apprehension, but I have been too polite, too tender, and so less happy.

The least show of pain in you is only too real for me. I'm the same as I was when I had a share in your troubles, altered enough, to your mind, to have lost your confidence, but with the same sense of your woes as ever I had. Over and above all the sorrows

of old age, I have no worries but yours, and it is very proper that the tumult of your mind should affect mine, which remained untroubled for so long while yours was in that happy state in which I used to know it

I have spoken too much of my merit in respect to you, to recall one's services is an insult to those who have failed to appreciate them And so I am going to ask a favour of you, instead of reproaching you with an obligation it is, Madam, to be permitted to clear myself of the suspicions you entertain about me I swear with the deepest truth on earth, (such as would survive the destruction of all moral principles and all religious feeling), I swear with this sincerity that is so dear to me that never have I said or done or insinuated anything that might injure the most delicate and sensitive of creatures And, pray, what ill should I speak of you, Madam? There's no crime, no violence no injustice of which you could stand accused, there are, to be sure, your anxieties and your low spirits It is your perplexity of mind that we cannot forgive If you are guilty, you sin against your self by worrying, and against us by robbing us of our gaiety Every man is justified in demanding the restoration of your happiness and his own pleasure

Indeed, Madam, you are accountable to every Gentleman for the graciousness of your behaviour, to all your friends for the pleasure of your acquaintance and the freedom of your house You are accountable to the learned for your studies, to the refined for your good taste, and to me for those fine qualities, which I have praised so much Restore to me that illustrious Woman, who had none of the weaknesses of her sex, restore to me that merry wisdom, that agreeable severity, those qualities, which made your lovers philosophers, those charms that made philosophers, lovers

Those happy days are gone, but where indeed?
When Reason with your sweetest wish agreed,
When Wisdom's sober lessons had a part
Among the Pleasures of a loving Heart [1]

Bring back those happy days, when, always mistress of your self, you allowed no freedom to anyone who was worth the trouble of subduing You can do it, Madam, you can do it You have preserved the substance of those qualities, which you have hidden from the world, and we the inclination to admire them, as soon as you make use of them again Therefore, take possession of your senses once more, and resume that intelligence you have relinquished for those that are inferior to your own

In your present state of mind, you remind me of a Prince who was in better health than his Physician, was worthier than his Confessor, and more enlightened than his Minister Yet, full of health as he was, would not have dared to eat any thing without the permission of a repining doctor, who, concerned, like a Christian, with his salvation, had confidence in an adviser who took no care of his own, and though very skilfull in affairs, handed them all over to a Counsellor who understood nothing at all about them

These, Madam, are the crimes you are accused of; as for those of another kind, you are guilty of none of them, or at any rate.

Where Beauty is, there Beauty's Charm
Is Substitute for Innocence!

So long as there comes no change on that fair countenance, the most upright men are grateful to you for the least recognition of Virtue that you care to give, but these privileges are yours alone, Madam An old sinner, like myself, should think seriously of

[1] These are the opening lines of a longer poem by Saint Evremond, entitled "Epître sur la Bassette", printed in Œuvres 1739 IV 160



"THE APOTHEOSIS OF SAINT EVREMOND

[*To face page* 245

the necessity for an ordered conduct, and of the terrible future state Thus the idea of retirement arose in me from a certain spirit of devotion, a happy inspiration these days, with all of us Frenchmen I have been touched by the edifying conversion of some, and by the exemplary holiness of others This secret inclination has made me follow that melancholy advice of *putting a space 'twixt Life and Death*, and 'tis it that has lead me to renounce the greatest pleasure of my life which was the charm of your company, so that I might retire into myself, and find myself ready to cease from living with less feeling and regret When there is nothing for me to cultivate but my own Self love, knowing my little worth, I shall have little difficulty in taking my departure

Let me add to these very refined observations that there are seasons for pleasure, when we cannot be too assiduous, but there are other occasions when the only merit reserved for us is the discretion of keeping away, or at the most of presenting our selves only when we can be of some service How happy I should be, Madam, to meet with such an occasion I would make you confess that no one has ever been attached to your interests with more zeal, fidelity and perseverance, than Your etc

LETTER 61 [Translated for the first time from Œuvres 1739 IV 233]

62

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN ON HER DESIGN OF RETIRING INTO A CONVENT [1]

[1683]

I know not Madam whether the title of *Friendship*

[1] This letter and the three which follow were written according to Des Maizeaux in these circumstances There happen d in the year 1683 an accident with which

without Friendship,[1] which you have bestowed on my Writing, is proper for it; but I'm sure it suits but ill with my sentiments, those particularly which you excite in me. Since that unlucky evening in which you acquainted me with the fatal Resolution you seem willing to take, I had not one moment's repose; or rather you have cast me into continual pain, which is something more violent than a bare privation of rest.

How is it possible for you to leave persons who are charm'd with you, and who adore you; friends that love you more than they love themselves, to go and hunt after unknown people you will not like, and who perhaps will insult you? Do you consider, Madam, that you are going to throw your self into a Convent, which the Constable's Lady,[2] your sister,

the Duchess Mazarin was extremely affected Baron Banier, a Swedish Gentleman, fell passionately in love with that Lady, who was not cruel to him Prince Philip of Savoy, her Nephew, fought a duel with him, and gave him a wound of which he died Madame Mazarin was disconsolate for the loss of her Lover, and in pain for her Nephew, lest he should be try'd and condemn'd, and lose all his Benefices in France She caus'd her Apartment to be hung with black, and hardly admitted the Visits of her best friends Saint Evremond did not doubt but she would go to Spain, and retire into the same Convent with the Constable Colonna's Lady, her Sister This appear'd the more likely, because the Duc Mazarin had sent over to England Madame de Ruz, a Lady of Quality in Provence, formerly a Retainer to his Duchess, who used all her endeavours to feed her grief, and [engage her to quit England But she [the Duchess] did not put her design in execution her Nephew was clear'd, and time having moderated her sorrow, she had no farther thoughts of leaving Great Britain"

The favourite nephew was the child of her sister, Olympe Mancini, who had married in 1657 Prince Eugène de Savoie-Carignan, Comte de Soissons

[1] *v* Letter 58

[2] Marie Mancini, sister to the Duchesse Mazarin, came near to being Queen of France Before his marriage, Louis XIV had pursued her all over France, but the Cardinal, her uncle,

abhorr d? If she returns thither, tis because she must either chuse that or Death, whereas, in order to go to it, you will leave a Court where you are esteemed, where the affection of a gracious and good-natur'd King affords you a kind treatment, where all sensible and judicious persons have both a respect and friendship for you Think well upon it, Madam The most happy day you will pass in a Nunnery, will not be worth the most melancholy you pass here at home

Indeed, if you were touch d, and actuated by a particular impulse of divine Grace that should prompt you to devote your self to God s service, the hardship of your Condition might be excused by the ardour of your Zeal, which would render every thing supportable to you but you are neither convinc'd, nor affected, and you must even learn to believe in Him whom you are going to serve so austerely You will not only meet with all the hardships that Nuns undergo but will miss the Spouse that comforts them To you every sort of spouse is odious not only such a one as is to be found abroad in the world, but even such a one as is to be found in a Monastery The being one day in doubt about the happiness of another life, is sufficient to cast into despair the chastest maid in a Nunnery for Faith alone strengthens and supports her and enables her to bear the mortifications she undergoes Who knows Madam, whether you will believe one quarter of an hour what she must ever believe to avoid being unhappy? Who knows, whether the idea of a promis'd Felicity will ever be

forbade the alliance. She did not content herself by marrying Charles Colonna Prince di Palliano Constable of Naples for soon after the marriage she deserted him and roamed about Italy with the Duchesse Mazarin who had treated her husband in the same way Weary of her peregrinations and at last separated from her sister s influence she escaped the reproaches of the Court by retiring into a Convent in Spain

powerful enough to bear you up against the sense of present ills?

Nothing is more reasonable to such as are sincerely convinced, than to live under that austerity which they believe necessary for their arrival at the fruition of eternal bliss; and nothing is more just in them who are not convinced, than to indulge their ease here below, and to taste with moderation every pleasure for which they have any relish. For this reason, those among the Philosophers who believ'd the Immortality of the Soul, made no account of the delights of this world; and such of them who after this life expected no other, have placed their sovereign Good in pleasure. You, Madam, profess a Philosophy entirely new: in opposition to *Epicurus* to pursue Pain, Mortifications, and Anguish, and in opposition to *Socrates*, you expect no reward from Virtue. Without much Religion you are going to profess a religious Life: you despise this World, and don't set much value upon the other. Unless therefore you have found out a third World treated purposely for you, there is no way left to justify your conduct.

We must, Madam, we must be convinced before we lay a restraint upon ourselves: we must not suffer without knowing for whom we suffer. In a word, we must earnestly endeavour to know God, before we deny ourselves. 'Tis in the midst of the Universe where the contemplation of the wonders of Nature will lead you to his knowledge on whom it depends. The sight of the Sun will make you comprehend the greatness and magnificence of him that form'd it, that wonderful and just Order, which cements and entertains all things, will bring you acquainted with his Wisdom. In short, Madam, in this World, which you design to leave, God lies all open and ready explain'd to our thoughts, whereas he lies so close in Monasteries, that he rather conceals than manifests himself, and is so disguis'd by the mean and unworthy

forms under which he is represented, that the most enlighten'd have much ado to know him However an old Abbess will continually speak to you about him, whom of all things she has the least knowledge of she'll command you to do some silly things by way of Penance, and an exact obedience must answer the command let it be never so ridiculous Your ghostly Father will assume no less an ascendant over you and your Reason thus humbled, will find itself a slave to presumptuous ignorance Reason, that secret character or image of God which he has imprinted on our souls, will represent you as a rebel, if you do not reverence in this Director of your Conscience the imbecillity of human nature Too simple and credulous Nuns will disgust you and you'll be offended at the libertine and the wanton You will find there the crimes of the world whose pleasures you have forsaken

Hitherto you have liv'd in grandeur and enjoy'd all the delights that attend it You were brought up as a Queen and you deserv'd to be one Being the Heiress of a Minister who govern'd the Universe, you brought a greater fortune to your Husband than all the Queens of Europe together to their Royal Consorts One day robb'd you of all that vast estate but your merit supply'd the loss of your fortune, and made you live with more magnificence in foreign countries than you would have lived in ours Curiosity delicacy cleanliness, nice dress conveniencies of life and pleasures have not abandon'd you If your discretion has forbidden you voluptuous enjoyments you have yet this advantage, that no favours were ever so desired as yours

Now Madam, what will you find in a Nunnery? A severe prohibition of all that nature reasonably requires, of all that humanity allows a cell a hard bed, more detestable diet, nasty stinking cloaths shall make up all your delights You'll be your sole

attendant, the only person to humour and please you, amidst so many things that will displease you; nor will you, perhaps, be in a condition to have for your self the most secret complaisance for self-love; perhaps your Beauty, being become altogether useless, will not discover it self, either to your own eyes, or those of others.

However, Madam, this wonderful Beauty of yours, this great ornament of the Universe, was not bestow'd upon you to be hid. You owe your self to the publick, to your friends, to your self. You were made to please your self, to please all, to dissipate sorrow, to inspire joy, to revive in general all that languishes. When the ugly and the foolish throw themselves into Nunneries, 'tis a divine inspiration that makes them quit the world, where they can but disgrace its author: but in you, Madam, 'tis a downright temptation from the Devil, who envying God's Glory, cannot bear the admiration, which the most excellent of his Works raises in us. Twenty whole years spent in singing of Psalms, and Anthems in the Choir, will not contribute so much to that Glory, as will one day in which your Beauty lies expos'd to the sight of the world The shewing your self is your true Vocation: 'tis the service you owe God; 'tis the most suitable worship you can pay him. If time has power to destroy the excellent harmony and proportion of your features, as well as those of others, if it should one day ruin that Beauty we now admire: then indeed, you may retire from the world; and after having fulfill'd the will of him that form'd you, go, and sing his praises in a Nunnery. But, be sure to follow the disposition he has made of your life; for if you forestall the hour he has appointed for your Retreat, you shall betray his intentions, by a secret complaisance for his enemy.

If you hearken to this enemy, one of your greatest misfortunes will be, that no body shall be accessary

to them but your self My Lady *Colonna*, your sister charges hers on the violences that are offer d her She has the cruelty of a Husband that compels her, the injustice of a Court that supports him, and a thousand other grievances either true or false to complain of But you, Madam, are the only cause of your hard fate, and can accuse none but your own error God makes His will known to you thro' my mouth, and you will not give me the hearing He makes use of my arguments to save you and you consult nothing but your ruin One day, over whelm'd with all the miseries I describe to you, you will but too late, think on him who endeavour'd to prevent them

You are flatter'd, perhaps, by the noise your Retreat will make, and by an extravagant Vanity you think nothing is more illustrious than to rob the world of the greatest Beauty that ever was in it, when others bestow nothing on God, but either natural Deformity, or the ruins of a worn out Face But how long have you preferr d the emptiness of opinion before the reality of things? And who, after all, will warrant you that your Resolution will not be accounted as foolish as extraordinary? Who can tell but it will be look d upon as the return of a wandering and travelling humour? Or, that people will imagine that you go three hundred leagues in quest of an Adventure divine indeed, if you please to call it so, but still an Adventure

You hope to find some comfort in my Lady *Colonna s* Conversation but if I am not mistaken, that comfort will not last long After you have talk'd three or four days of France and Italy, of the King s passion, and the timorousness of the Cardinal your Uncle [1], of what you are like to be and what you are at present, after having exhausted your memory of

[1] See previous note The Cardinal Mazarin had prevented the marriage for fear says Des Maizeaux the same should be resented by the Princes of the Blood and Nobility of France'

what pass'd at the Constable's House, of your going out of Rome, and of your unfortunate Voyages and Travels, you will find your self coop'd up in a Convent; and your Captivity, the hardship of which you will by that time begin to feel, will make you reflect on the sweet Liberty you enjoy'd in England. Those very things that now seem tiresome to you, will appear charming to your Imagination, and what you have quitted thro' disgust, will revive, and tantalize your appetite. Then, Madam, then, what force of mind must you be mistress of, to comfort your self under the sense of present ills, and lost pleasures?

I grant, my guesses may prove false, and my conjectures ill-grounded. I grant, my Lady *Colonna's* Conversation may ever be agreeable to you: but who will warrant that it will be in your power freely to enjoy it? 'Tis one of the Rules observ'd in religious Houses, not to permit any close correspondence between persons that take delight in each other's company; because the union of private persons is a kind of breach of the obligations one has contracted with the whole society. Besides, the Constable's care and vigilance may extend so far, as to prevent a communication, that will raise a thousand chimerical fears in the head of a suspicious man, who has too much offended. I do not mention the caprice and freaks of an Abbess, nor the secret jealousies of Nuns, who will do all the spite they can, to a person whose merit will drown theirs. Thus, Madam, it may be your fate, that after you have turn'd Nun, and live with your sister, you will be scarce allow'd to see her; and so you will either be alone with your melancholy thoughts, or in a crowd, amidst impertinence, error, and folly, tired with Sermons in a language you little understand, fatigu'd with Matins that will disturb your morning rest, wearied with the continual habit of saying Vespers, and the troublesome mumbling of a Rosary

What shall I do then, will you say? preserve your Reason, Madam, for you'll make your self unhappy if you lose it. What a prodigious loss is the want of that exquisite discernment and sound judgment you were mistress of? Have you committed so great a crime against your self, thus to inflict so severe a punishment on your own person? And then what reason have you to complain of your friends thus to exercise so cruel a revenge upon them? The Italians murther their enemies, but their friends escape their savage way of doing themselves justice.

Madame *de Beverweert* and I have already received mortal strokes, the very thought of your sufferings, has occasion'd ours, and I find my self at present the most miserable of Men, because you are going to make your self the most miserable of all Women. When I go to see her in the morning we look upon each other *speechless for a quarter of an hour, and this mournful* silence is ever attended with our tears. Take pity on us, Madam if you'll have none for your self. One may go so far as to deprive one's self, of the conveniencies of life, for the sake of friends: we only desire you to forbear its torments: and shan't we obtain our request? You must needs be naturally very hard-hearted, since you are the first that feels the effects, of your own rigour. Think, Madam, think seriously on what I tell you: you stand upon the brink of ruin: one step forward, and you are undone, one step backward and you are safe. Your good, or bad Fortune, is in your own hands: have but the courage to be happy: and you will infallibly be so.

If you leave the World as you seem resolv'd: my comfort is that I shall not stay long in it. Nature kinder than you will soon put a period to my melancholy life. In the mean time, Madam your commands will supersede hers when you please: for the right she has over me is subordinate to that I have resigned to you. There's no Voyage I shall not undertake to

be in your company; and if you shall strain your rigour so far, as even to deny me that favour, I shall go and hide my self in some desert, being utterly incapable to relish any Conversation but yours In that Solitude, your image will supply all other objects; there I shall disengage me from, and forget my self, if I may so speak, that I may eternally think on you. There I shall learn to die, and my last Sighs, will acquaint the whole world, with the power of your charms and merits, and the depth of my affliction.

LETTER 62 [Works, 1728 II 285]

63

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN ON THE DEATH OF HER LOVER

[1683]

I was told you were going to leave England, and tho' yet uncertain where to fix your Residence, that you were resolved to go out of the Country, where you ought to stay. In the name of wonder, Madam, what do you mean? what are you going to do? You will give your enemies invincible reasons against your self, and deprive your friends of all means to serve you. You will, by this new ramble, revive the dormant fault of all the former, and ruin all your present and future interest. But, say you, can one appear in publick, after this strange unlucky adventure? But, answer I, how can one hide one's self without making a bare misfortune a crime. 'Tis certain our ill conduct often turns misfortunes into faults, and I am afraid, Madam, you will find it by experience. If you continue any longer in your obscure retreat, every one will reproach you, with what you seem to reproach your self, and you'll be condemn'd by thousands, who are now disposed to pity you.

But after all, Madam is the accident that has befallen you, so very extraordinary? I could name to you some modern Beauties who have borne the loss of their Lovers with very moderate sorrow, but that I have a greater example in store for you *Helen*, less beautiful than you, but next to you the most beautiful woman the world ever saw, *Helen* caused both Gods and Men to fight ten years together, and was more proud of what others did for her sake, than asham'd of what she had done herself These, Madam, are the Heroines, you ought to imitate, and not the *Didos* and *Thisbes*, those wretches who have disgrac d Love by the desperate extravagance of their passion But what mean you by your sorrow? To lament a dead man is not to lament a Lover Your Lover is now no more than a sad and empty Object, form'd by your imagination 'tis to be in love with your own idea and the Lady who is in love with *Alexander the Great*,[1] is as excusable in her chimerical passion, as you are in yours, since a man who died to day has no more to do with this world, than that famous conqueror Therefore you yourself are the subject matter of your tears whilst being too faithful to your affliction, you vainly endeavour to restore what Nature has destroy'd

Then talk of his disastrous fate no more
A grief which on your Beauty preys give o er
The man you mourn for is for ever gone
And you're alone the subject of your moan
Your raving fancy to your self unkind
Has form'd a Phantom to distract your mind

[1] See the French Play called Les Visionaires writ by Des Marets [note of Des Maizeaux] This the most successful comedy of Desmarets de Saint Sorlin (1595–1676) (acted in 1637) was a satirical caricature of the Precieuses of the Hotel de Rambouillet One of the ladies in it conceives an elaborate passion for Alexander the Great some two thousand years after his death

I give you the best Arguments in the world, both in Prose and Verse: but the more pains I take to comfort you, the more I find you inconsolable. Since the times of *Artemisia*,[1] and the Duchesse *de Montmorency*,[2] both famous for their solemn affliction, and celebrated by the Mausoleums they erected for their Husbands, no sorrow like yours was ever seen. 'Tis true, it was, in a manner, enjoyn'd to you by the Directress of your grief[3] No moment passes, but *Dolorida*[4] approaches your ears to tell you news of the other world; and there's no secret she leaves untry'd, to entertain in your soul the love of the dead, and the hatred of the living. Sometimes she makes use of a sad and mournful countenance, sometimes of a woeful story, and sometimes, for variety-sake, of a melancholy and lamentable song And those very Hymns which

[1] Artemisia, the wife of Prince Mausolus, at whose death (*c* 350 B C) she was overcome by a grief that is scarcely paralleled in recorded history The *Mausoleum* (the origin of the word) which she erected in his honour at Halicarnassus was chosen by antiquity as one of the Seven Wonders of the World

[2] "Not a very pleasant character," says Tallemant des Réaux [*v* Historiettes Paris, 1861 III 94] She married Henri II de Montmorency (1595–1632), who was beheaded for the part he had taken in the revolt of Gaston d'Orleans After his death she commemorated him in a magnificent monument, and then retired with her grief to the Convent of the Visitation at Moulins, where she died in 1666 Mairet, the dramatist, addresses her in a dedication as "Tres-inconsolable Princesse"

[3] Madame de Ruz, the leader of a kind of Salvation Army Crusade to restore the Duchesse Mazarin to her husband, had been sent over by the latter with a band of pious young ladies when the Duchess's lover had been killed [*v* note to previous letter, and Works, III 117 *et seq* "Memoirs of the Duchesse Mazarin", by Saint Réal]

[4] i e Madame de Ruz, a nickname Saint Evremond had appropriated from his favourite "Don Quixote" *v* Chapters xxxvi-xl of the Second Part "The strange and never-thought-of Adventures of the Disconsolate Matron, *alias* the Countess of Trifaldi"

the Church has instituted to celebrate the death of our Saviour, are mournfully sung at his nativity, when the same Church ordains us to rejoice

If one should observe in you the least sign of your being restor'd to your gay humour, if, by an impulse of nature, you should break out into the least sally of joy, contrary to *Dolorida's* orders, a severe look of hers makes you immediately return to the duty of your sorrow and such art of grieving and lamenting is employ'd to give you a disgust for the world, that if the same melancholy methods, and gloomy application were to be used with Mr *Talbot* [1] I don't in the least doubt that in a fortnight one might make a good Hermit of the most jovial of all men Let therefore no body wonder at *Dolorida's* successful attempts at a studied desolation the wonder is, you have preserved so much judgment as you have done You have enough left, Madam, in spite of all the endeavours that have been used to rob you of it entirely, in order to dispose of you with more ease to your ruin but nevertheless, do not take it ill of me, if I shew you the difference there is between you and your self

What would formerly have said that Duchesse *Mazarin* whom we knew full of wit, and penetration, what would our Madame *Mazarin* have said, if she had seen a small religious Flock cross the Sea, to settle their wandering Sanctity in the House of a person of Quality? And what would she not have said of the hospitable Lady, who would have entertain'd these pious Sisters? What would Madame *Mazarin* have

[1] Saint Evremond is referring presumably to Dick Talbot (1630–1691) who at the accession of James II two years after this letter was written was created Earl of Tyrconnel There was not a more genteel man at Court, says Hamilton, who has given some account of his love affairs in Gramont s Memoirs and the Earl of Clarendon speaks of him as a very handsome young man wore good clothes and without doubt of a clear ready courage

said, if she had seen the reverend Mother superior, divide her time, between the exercises of piety, and her amorous lectures, between the fervency of prayers, and the eagerness of getting a guinea, between the pious frauds of Religion, and the cheats at Basset? What would she have said, if she had seen those young plants, that wanted moisture, bear miraculously forward fruit, thro' the particular blessing of that house? Come on, little *Marote*,[1] you proselyte of their holinesses, come and learn us something of the mystery, in which you have been initiated: shew your self, *Marote*, and convince the publick of the efficacy of their wholesome instructions The thing is too serious, and too pressing, to make a jest of it any longer.

In the name of God, Madam, that name which is abused by the Hypocrites, who in the judgment of my Lord *Bacon*, are the great Atheists[2], in the name of God, rid your self of a contagious commerce with wickedness and folly. You will no sooner have freed your self from it, but you'll recover all your former judgment, and retrieve your pristine Reputation Consult solidly your interest, and wisely your repose. This is all I beg of you. make your self happy, and you'll do more for me than 'twere in your power to do for a Lover, let your favours be never so precious.

LETTER 63 [Works, 1728 II 294]

[1] "One of the young Girls that came over with Madame de Ruz, and who bore the forward fruit" [Des Maizeaux's discreet note]

[2] "the great Atheists indeed are hypocrites, which are ever handling holy things, but without feeling, so as they must needs be cauterized in the end" [Bacon's Essays Of Atheism]

64

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN ON HER DESIGN OF LEAVING ENGLAND

[1683]

I do my self the honour to write to you Madam, not that I flatter my self with the hope of regaining your favour, but only to have the satisfaction to tell you the greatest truth in the world, which is Madam, that you never had, nor ever will have, so faithful a servant as I have been, and will ever be 'Tis true, this fidelity of mine had nothing in view, but your interest Leaving for others, to humour your fancies, the complaisance they have at present to entertain your sorrows, I consider d what was conducing to your good, and opposed what unfortunately pleased you to your ruin After so just an assurance of my zeal, I will tell you that you have nothing to fear in England but those who endeavour to give you a di gust for it and would to God you were as truly persuaded of the civility of the English, as they are ready to give you proofs of it on all occasions Shew your self, Madam for you never can hurt your self so much as by hiding your self But when you become accessible, give us leave to come to you any other way, but that cursed Apartment,[1] fitter to conjure up the Ghost of *Samuel*, than to lead to Madame *Mazarin s* Chamber If all those dismal preparations are of *Arcabone s*[2] providing we pray God to preserve us against the inchantment But if that black melancholy proceeds from your own humour, if you think on nothing but to hurt and torment your self, learn, Madam that the greatest cruelty is to torment ones self Who does not forgive himself deserves not to

[1] *v* note Letter 62 *supra*

[2] A famous Enchantress sister to the Magician Arcalaus in the Romance called *Amadis de Gaul* [note of Des Maizeaux]

be forgiven by others: for he teaches them to be severe and unrelenting. Let us come to the point; for I begin to be weary of generalities

Suppose your Nephew should lose his Benefices; I don't deny but it is matter of grief but you have sustained greater losses without breaking your heart for it. A man who profess'd love to you, has been kill'd. 'Tis an unfortunate accident, I own it · but, bating your affliction, there's nothing very extraordinary in this adventure. Lovers are mortal, like other men. If you can make Love to be an exemption from dying, the Ladies will be pester'd with Lovers; and there will be as many as there are Men I know 'tis decent to mourn for the loss of those that love us; but to summon all that is direful to the assistance of our grief, and take thereupon destructive resolutions, is what the Dead do not require from us.

Give me leave to reproach you with something that's mean, but which is necessary to animate you to shake off the concernment you are in In times of prosperity, I know, no body shews more Philosophy than you You talk more gravely than *Plutarch*, you speak more Sentences than *Seneca*; you make more Reflections than *Montaigne*, but upon the least accident, upon the least trouble that befalls you, you are bewilder'd, and lost to all counsel, you renounce your own reason, and resign your self to those who have none, or whose interest lies in your ruin. 'Tis too much, Madam, 'tis too much in all conscience to act the same Farce twice in one family. And why, I pray, did you wonder so much at my Lady *Colonna's* leaving Turin, where she had nothing but the dry and bare protection of the *Duke of Savoy*? Why, I say, did you so much wonder, if you can now be capable of leaving the King of England, as secure by his power, as solid by his beneficence?

Notwithstanding all these clear and forcible arguments, I am still afraid lest you over-look your Interest,

unfortunate, not to see in England what suits best with you, yet more unfortunate in seeing it too well as soon as you are gone out of England! You shall then recover the light when you want means to enjoy it As long as you are in this Kingdom, either in Town or Country, you may mend your affairs, as bad a condition as they are in, but after you are once on board the Ship, here's no more resource You must go to places where you'll find neither satisfaction nor interest, where your imaginations will be frustrated, and where, to torment you, you will find the sense of present misery, and the remembrance of past felicity

I know, Madam you don't care to hear of Examples But without regarding your aversion, I shall make bold to tell you, that the Queen of *Bohemia*,[1] upon her going out of England, dragg'd about a wandering necessity from one Nation to another, and that *Marie de Medicis*, Mother, or Mother in law to three great Kings went to starve at Cologne I look upon you, Madam with tears in my eyes, as a person ready to be sacrificed unless you have the force to save your self from the Altar Do as much for your self as *Racine* did for *Iphigenia* put an *Eriphile* in your place,[2] and

[1] The Princess Elizabeth daughter of James I and mother of Prince Rupert (*d* 1662) endured for the greater part of her unfortunate life the insults and indignities arising from the effects of her husband s misrule

[2] Marie de Medici (1573–1642) the wife of Henry IV of France was the mother of Louis XIII and mother in law of Charles I of England and Philip IV of Spain She died at Cologne

[3] Racine in his tragedy of Iphigenie en Aulide (1674) had substituted for the traditional *denouement* one of his own invention The classical legend relates that the goddess Artemis who had demanded the sacrifice of Iphigenia spared her as she was about to die and arranged for a hind to be slain in her stead Racine it seems realized that this miraculous intervention might strain the credulity of his audience and unwilling to sacrifice Iphigenia herself which would have been an intolerable abuse of the rules governing

come and comfort men of honour with your safety, and her ruin.

LETTER 64 [Works, 1728 II 298]

65

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN ON THE SAME SUBJECT

[1683]

You doubt not, Madam, that I am sensibly touch'd to see you leave England, but I should be inconsolable, if you design'd to go and live either with the Princes of Germany, or the Grandees of Spain. Nothing is more natural for you, than living in France. For my own part, I would not desire either a better Air, or a finer Country England, however, has its conveniencies: a great many Guineas, with the liberty of enjoying them as one thinks fit.

I cannot go on with this sort of discourse. All diversions are necessary to amuse my sorrow; but it is very difficult to make use of any, when it comes into my thoughts that I shall never see you again. I look upon you as a dead Person, with respect to me. All your good Qualities appear before me to affect me; and I can fix my eye on no imperfection that can comfort me Would to God you had left me some reason to complain, more provoking than the abandoning me to my little merit. A just resentment of an injury would exasperate me against you; but your contempt obliges me to do my self an irksome piece of justice, without affording me any thing to reproach you with. Pray let this Letter serve for an Adieu:

the choice of the tragic heroine, invented the character of *Eriphile* and wound up his tragedy with her death instead of Iphigenia's [*v* Racine's Preface to "Iphigénie en Aulide"]

for I shall not have the strength to bid it by word of mouth, and I shall weep in my Chamber, as I do already now, to spare my Age the shame of shedding Tears in publick Remember now and then an old Servant However, I fear what I ask for you will not remember me, but when my Predictions come to pass, and I had rather they should prove false, and be forgotten As for you, Madam, you will ever be remember'd by those who had the honour to know you Those you think the least disposed to regret you, will not forgive the resolution you have taken to leave us Your only enemy is your self, and your sad ideas and melancholy attendants If a man could look into your head as well as on your face, he would find your brain blacken'd with the *Dead of La Trappe* [1] and your other dismal Imaginations Farewell, Madam The bare mentioning your affliction, would make me sad, if I were not so already Guess at my sorrow and zeal for your service for 'tis not in my power to express it

For a long while, I have not taken upon me to give you counsel Let the last be, to reconcile your self with the Duc *Mazarin*, if you can do it with any safety If there be none return to England, to pass some time in the country I am persuaded the King will not abandon you, and you will find more people ready to serve you than you imagine As for Monasteries, one lives wretchedly there, unless one becomes crazy

[1] There is a Book of the *Lives* of some Persons that died at the Monastery of La Trappe and left behind them the reputation of being holy men [note of Des Maizeaux] The monastery of La Trappe celebrated for the almost inhuman severity of its life was reconstituted in 1662 by the Abbe Bouthillier de Rance (1626–1700) who is said to have buried himself there in order to forget a tragic love affair with the Duchesse de Montbazon He was the author of a Relation de la vie et de la mort de quelques Réligieuses de l Abbaye de la Trappe which is probably the book mentioned in this letter

All things consider'd, 'tis better for a married woman to suffer with an Husband, than to suffer with an Abbess. There is more honour and virtue in it Rid your self, as fast as you can, of the black whims that proceed from the spleen, and in which even your imagination has no share.

LETTER 65. [Works, 1728 II 301]

66

TO MONSIEUR . . .

WHO COULD NOT ENDURE THAT THE EARL OF SAINT ALBANS SHOULD BE IN LOVE IN HIS OLD AGE[1]

[before 1684]

Why should you wonder, that old Men have still an inclination to love? 'Tis not ridiculous for them to suffer themselves to be moved, but 'tis vain in them to pretend that they are able to please I must own to you, I love the company of pretty Ladies, as much as ever I did, but I admire their Beauty without

[1] *v* Evelyn's Diary, September 18, 1683 "I went to London, to visit the Duchess of Grafton, now great with child, a most virtuous and beautiful lady Dining with her at my Lord Chamberlain's, met my Lord of St Albans, now grown so blind, that he could not see to take his meat He has lived a most easy life, in plenty even abroad, whilst his Majesty was a sufferer, he has lost immense sums at play, which yet, at about eighty years old, he continues, having one that sits by him to name the spots on the cards He eat and drank with extraordinary appetite He is a prudent old courtier, and much enriched since his Majesty's return" He died in 1684 Cf Poems on Affairs of State Vol II 1703 "Signior Dildoe by the Earl of Rochester, 1678"

"Saint Albans with Wrinkles and Smiles in his Face
Whose kindness to Strangers becomes his high Place,
In his Coach and six Horses is gone to pergo,
To take the fresh Air with Signior *Dildoe*"

any design, heaven knows, of making any impression upon their hearts I only endeavour to please my self, and study rather to find tenderness in my own breast, than in theirs 'Tis by their charms and not by their favours, that I pretend to be obliged, and if ever I complain of them 'tis only of their disagreeableness, and not of their rigour

Let others call you cruel and severe
I'll call you kind for here, Fair
Thanks to your Eyes that far out-shine the day
They warm and enlivate my day

The greatest pleasure that old Men have left them, is to live, and nothing secures their life so effectually as Love *I think therefore I am*, is the conclusion upon which the whole Philosophy of *Descartes* turns, but 'tis cold and languishing for an old Man *I love, therefore I am*, is a consequence that has all life and spirit in it, it re-calls the desires of youth, and sometimes bribes my imagination to believe I am young

You will tell me, that 'tis a double error, not to believe we are what we are, and to fancy we are what we are not But what truths can be so advantageous as these pleasing errors, that take away from us all thoughts of the Evils we suffer, and in return, give us the sense of a Happiness we don't possess But for want of considering things with due attention, we pretend that Love is only calculated for the meridian of Youth, tho Reason should restrain the violence of its inclinations, and we call those old people fools who have the courage to love, tho' the wisest thing they can do, is to animate and awaken the lethargy of Nature, by flattering images of Love What are we the better for Life, if we are not sensible that we are alive? We surely owe our life to our love, if it is able to reanimate it, when the decays of age have made us lose all sense of it

At this age all the springs of ambition leave us,

the desire of glory no longer fires us, our strength fails us, our courage is extinguish'd, or at least weaken'd; Love, Love alone supplies the place of every virtue, it averts all thoughts of those evils that surround us, and the fear of those that threaten us. It turns aside the image of death, which otherwise wou'd continually present it self to our eyes. it dissipates the terrours of the imagination, and the troubles of the soul, and makes us the wisest men in the world, in respect of our selves, when it makes us pass for mad-men in the common opinion of others

LETTER 66 [Works, 1728 II 308]

67

TO YOUNG DERY [1]

[1684]

My Dear Boy,

I don't wonder at your having an invincible aversion hitherto against a thing, which of all others, concerns you the most nearly. You have been advised by rustical and clownish people, to get your self *gelt*: an expression so base and odious, that it would have shock'd a far less delicate mind, than yours As for my own part, my dear Boy, I shall

[1] "The Duchesse Mazarin's Page, who sang well" [note of Des Maizeaux] It is possible that it was young Dery whom Evelyn heard at Court a week before Charles II's death "the French boy so famed for his singing" who figured in that celebrated and often-quoted scene of "inexpressible luxury and profaneness and all dissoluteness, and as it were total forgetfulness of God the King sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarine" [Evelyn, Diary, Feb 4, 1684/5] Mr Hartmann ["The Vagabond Duchess", p 240] says that Dery was an English boy, but I have found no authority to support his statement

endeavour to promote your advantage, in a more agreeable way, and I will tell you with all the terms of insinuation, that you must be sweetened by a gentle Operation, which will secure to you the fineness of your complexion a long time, and preserve the tunefulness of your voice all your life

Those Guineas, those red Cloathes, those little Horses which you get, are not given to Mr *Dery's* son for his noble birth, 'tis your face and your voice, that procure you them In three or four years, alas! you will lose the charms of both, if you have not the wit to prevent that loss, and the source of all those allurements will be dried up Now you talk familiarly with Kings, you are caressed by Duchesses, and praised by all the persons of quality, but when the charms of your Voice are gone, you will only be a fit companion for *Pompey*, and perhaps be despised by Mr *Stourton* [1]

But you are afraid, you say, that you will be less in the Ladies' favour Lay aside all such apprehensions the Age in which we live, is not an age of simpletons, the merit which follows the operation is well known, and for one Mistress that Mr *Dery*, as he was made by nature, might have had, Mr *Dery* softened by art, shall have a hundred You are sure then of having Mistresses enow, which is a great happiness, you will have no Wife, which is being free of a great evil happy in having no Wife, happier in being without children Mr *Dery's* Daughter would be got with child, his Son would be hanged and what is yet more certain, his Wife would make him a Cuckold Secure your self against those misfortunes by a speedy Operation thus you will be devoted purely to your self, proud of so small a merit which will make your fortune, and procure you the friendship of all the World If I live long

[1] Pompey and Mr Stourton according to Des Maizeaux were respectively the Duchess s Negro servant and Page

enough to see you when your voice becomes rough, and your beard grows, you will be much blamed by every body. I desire you to prevent this, and believe me to be your most sincere friend

LETTER 67 [Works, 1728 II 331]

68

TO A LADY WHO DESIGN'D TO TURN DEVOUT

[1684]

I am inform'd, Madam, that you design to turn Devout, and I heartily return God thanks for having more occasion, in our conversations, for the purity of those thoughts you are going to entertain, than for those that might be suggested to you by the Commerce of the World. I therefore conjure you, as one who is concern'd with Heaven, to take up a true Devotion; and in order to render your Conversion such as I would have it, it will not be improper to describe to you that of our Ladies, such as it is, that you may avoid the faults that attend it.

Their ordinary Repentance, as far as I have observ'd, is not so much a sorrow for their sins, as a regret for their pleasures: wherein they are themselves deceiv'd, amorously lamenting what they have lost, while they believe that they devoutly bewail what they have done

Those decay'd beauties that give up themselves to God, fancy that they have extinguish'd old flames, which, however, secretly endeavour to kindle a-fresh; and their Love having only chang'd its object, they preserve for their last sufferings, the same sighs, and the same tears, which express'd their old torments. They have lost nothing of the first troubles of an amorous heart, such as fears, swoonings, and raptures:

soft sorrows, and precious languishments When they were young, they sacrific'd Lovers now they have none, they sacrifice themselves, and the new Convert offers up to God the old Voluptuary

I have known those whose Conversion was, in some measure, owing to the pleasure of change others, who devoting themselves to God, felt a malicious joy from their fancied infidelity to the Men

There are those who renounce the World, out of a spirit of revenge against the World which has left them others again, who mix their natural vanity with such a renunciation, and the same Pride that made them leave the Courtiers for the Prince, secretly flatters them that they can despise the Prince for God

To some of them, God is a new Lover, that comforts them for him they have lost in others, Devotion is a prospect of private interest, and the mysterious cloak of a new conduct

There are some melancholy and reserv'd, who relish best an obscure pleasure, and prefer an awkward pretender to sanctity, before a handsome genteel lover sometimes they design to raise themselves up to Heaven in good earnest, and their weakness makes them rest by the way, with the Directors who conduct them Devotion has some tenderness for God, which may easily return to a passion for Men

I forgot to mention some women in retirement, who in appearance, give up themselves to God, that they may, in some measure, shake off their dependence on a Mother, or a Husband There are others of a hundred different kinds but very few wherein the character of a Woman does not appear, either in their humour or their love

To judge a right of the merit of Devout women, we must rather consider what God requires of them than what they design to do for God For in truth, all the mortifications they undergo of their own

motion, are as many agreeable effects of their fancy; and a woman is pretty well rewarded in this world, by being permitted to do what she pleases. We must observe how they behave themselves in those things which God exacts from their submission, and when they shall be regular in their manners; modest in their conversation, and patient of injuries, then shall I be satisfy'd of their Devotion by their conduct.

There are many passionate and Devout women, who think themselves fired by the ardour of a pure zeal, but there are few that wisely contain themselves within the limits of a sound and solid piety. There are a pretty good number of those who could die for God, thro' a sense of Love: but few who would live according to His precepts, with regularity and reason. You may expect any thing from their fervour and zeal, when attended with some disorder; but you can hardly hope for any thing from a Devotion, wherein they have occasion for evenness of temper, wisdom, and moderation

Take advantage, Madam, of the errors of others: and as you design now to give up your self to God, let your Devotion consist less of what you love, than of what pleases Him. If you don't beware, your heart will offer up to Him its own affections, instead of receiving His impressions, and you will be wholly yours, when you shall fancy to be wholly His.

Not but that there may be a holy and happy agreement between His will and yours. You may love what He loves, you may desire what He desires: but thro' a pleasing and secret impulse, we generally do what we desire our selves, and this ought to render us more cautious and attentive, that we may always act consonantly, and with regard to His will.

But in order to that, you need not, Madam, subject your self to the conduct of those Directors, who lead you into certain niceties of spirituality and devotion, which neither you, nor, for the most part,

they themselves, understand The will of God is not so abstruse, but that it easily discovers it self to those who design to follow it so that, on most occasions, you shall have more need of submission than knowledge Those precepts that have any relation to our desires are clearly understood, and agreeably follow'd, those that thwart our inclinations, are likewise plain enough but nature strives against them, and the untractable soul rejects their impression

I discourse with you more seriously than at first I intended, and to conclude still more profitably, I would require two things of you, in the new course of Devotion you are going to enter upon The first, that you take care, not to offer up your love to God, as an unprofitable passion, which you design to keep in use the second, that you never dissemble your animosities, under the appearance of zeal, and never persecute those you hate, under a false shew of piety

LETTER 68 [Works 1728 II 340]

69

TO THE MARESCHAL DE CREQUI [1]

[1685]

I send you herewith, my Lord, the Letter you have advised me to write to the King, and which you have so obligingly promis'd me to deliver to his Majesty You will find in it a perfect submission, and a sincere

[1] The Mareschal de Crequi constantly endeavoured to obtain a pardon for Saint Evremond and permission for him to return to France On at least two occasions he asked his friend to write him a letter which could be shown to the King His efforts availed nothing and when permission was finally granted after Créqui's death Saint Evremond

repentance of a fault, of which I have no knowledge, but by the punishment that I undergo for it. This alone is to me a conviction of my crime: if I did not know that the King punishes no body that has not deserv'd it, I should be still unsensible of my having offended As the affections of the heart cast a cloud before the understanding, so the zeal I felt within me for every thing that concerns the King, did not suffer me to believe that I could offend him A little less confidence in my zeal, and more precaution, would have made me stay in France, where I should have had the honour to converse with your Lordship, which would have been the greatest happiness of my life But a man must adapt himself the best he can to the state he is in, without seeking a vain comfort in the remembrance of his past condition After all, I cannot account my self very unhappy: if fortune has depriv'd me of a small Estate, she has afforded me a glorious experience; I mean, my Lord, of your Friendship, which I find as warm and hearty, after five and twenty years' absence, as it could have been if I had the honour to be with your Lordship every day.

As for the advice you gave me to praise his Majesty, you will give me leave not to follow it Your Affection for me, makes you fancy, that I could give an agreeable turn to his praises but I know how dangerous it is to commend a Prince, who has more taste and discernment, than those who commend him have either wit or genius Most praises are gross, and therefore nauseous; affected, and so disagreeable,

was too old to make use of it This letter, the only one that has survived, is not printed by Giraud, and in Planhol's edition it is dated 1664, an absurd error in few of the definite statement, at the end of the second paragraph "after five and twenty years' absence" It is probable that the discontinuance of his pension at Charles II's death was the cause of his renewing his old desire to return to France

far fetch'd, and consequently ill suited with the subject I must have fallen into one or other of those inconveniences, and I chuse rather not to praise at all, than not praise well 'Tis a great presumption for a man to think, he can set off things, that sufficiently set off themselves they need but be named, to make an impression on men s minds When ever they are mention'd, I am the first that's affected with them but I do not venture to launch out into praises, that perhaps might wrong them, and I think I do more in their behalf, by carefully avoiding to daub them, than others do by curiously endeavouring to embellish them

LETTER 69 [Works 1728 I cxxi]

70

TO THE MODERN LEONTIUM [1] ON THE MORALS OF EPICURUS

[1685]

You desire to be informed, whether I composed those *Reflections upon the Doctrine of Epicurus*, which are attributed to me [2] I might honour my self with them, but I don t love to give my self a merit which I have no right to, for to deal ingenuously

[1] i e Ninon de Lanclos Leontium, an Athenian lady was the favourite pupil of Epicurus Malice has supported the legend that she was no better than a concubine and that Epicurus disguised the true nature of his relations with her under the cloak of his philosophy It is reasonable to suppose that like Abelard and Heloise they enjoyed together the pleasures of the flesh and the spirit [Cf for example, Saint Evremond s invitation to Ninon Letter 38]

[2] This short essay was frequently printed over Saint Evremond s name [*v* Works, 1728 III Appendix 279] It was written according to Des Maizeaux by Jean François Sarazin (1603–1654)

with you, they are not mine. I have a great disadvantage in these little Treatises, that are printed under my name. There are some good performances which I do not own, because they don't belong to me, and amongst my Writings, they have inserted abundance of impertinent things, which I don't take the trouble to disown. At my Age, one hour of Life well managed is more considerable with me, than the concern of an indifferent Reputation. With what difficulty a man parts with Self-love! I quit it as an Author, I resume it as a Philosopher, finding a secret pleasure in neglecting what others so earnestly pursue.

The word *Pleasure* recalls *Epicurus* into my mind, and makes me confess, that of all the Opinions of Philosophers concerning the soveraign Good, none appears to me so rational as his It would be to no purpose to alledge here the reasons, that have been given a hundred times by the Epicureans, that the Love of Pleasure, and the avoiding of Grief, are the first and most natural motions, that are observed in men; that riches, power, honour, and virtue may contribute to our happiness · but that the sole enjoyment of Pleasure, is, to speak all, the single end to which our actions tend 'Tis a thing clear enough of it self, and I am fully persuaded of it At the same time I don't well know what this *Pleasure* of *Epicurus* was; for I never saw learned Men so divided about any point, as they have been about the Morals of this Philosopher. Philosophers, and even some of his own Disciples, have exclaimed against him, as a sensual and lazy person, that never quitted his idleness but to make a debauch. All Sects have opposed his Magistrates have looked upon his Doctrine to be prejudicial to the publick. *Cicero*, so just and so wise in his opinions, and *Plutarch*, so much esteemed for his judgment, have not been favourable to him. And as for the Christians,

the antient Fathers have made him pass for the greatest and most dangerous of impious persons Thus I have shown you his enemies, now let us see who his Friends were

Metrodorus, *Hermarchus*, *Meneceus*, and many others that used to dispute with him, had as much veneration as friendship for his person *Diogenes Laertius* could not write his Life with more advantage to his reputation than he has done *Lucretius* was his adorer, *Seneca*, as much an enemy as he was to his sect, hath mentioned him with praise If some Cities have express'd an aversion for him, others have erected statues in his honour, and among the Christians, if the Fathers have cried him down, *Gassendus* and Monsieur *Bernier* do vindicate him

In the midst of all these authorities, so opposite one to the other, what way is there to decide the controversy? Shall I say that *Epicurus* is a corrupter of good Manners, upon the credit of a jealous Philosopher, or a discontented Disciple, who perhaps suffer d himself to be blindly led by his own resentments, for some imagin'd injury? Besides, since 'tis evident that *Epicurus* aimed to ruin the common received opinion about Providence, and the Immortality of the Soul, cannot I easily persuade my self that the world revolted against a doctrine that gave so much scandal, and that they defamed the life of the Philosopher, on purpose to discredit his opinions with more authority? But if I am unwilling to receive all that his enemies and his rivals have published of him, so I do not easily believe what his defenders dare say I don't think that he had a design to introduce a *Pleasure* more severe than the Virtue of the Stoicks This jealousy of austerity seems to me extravagant in a voluptuous Philosopher, take his Pleasure in what sense you please A pretty mystery this to declaim against a Virtue that divests a wise man of his senses, to establish a Pleasure that

affords him no motion! The wise Man of the Stoicks is a virtuous Insensible, that of the Epicureans a voluptuous Immoveable: the first is in pain without pain, the second tastes pleasure without pleasure. What reason had a Philosopher, who did not believe the immortality of the soul, to mortify the senses? why should he put a divorce between two parts, composed of the same matter, that ought to find their advantage in the mutual concord and union of their pleasures? I pardon in our Religious men the sad singularity of eating nothing but Herbs, since they think to obtain eternal happiness by these austerities. but that a Philosopher, who knows no other good things than those of this world; that the Doctor of Pleasure should regale himself with bread and water to arrive at the sovereign happiness of life, is what my little understanding cannot comprehend. If *Epicurus* was such a man, I admire that they don't make his pleasure centre in Death; for if we consider the misery of life, his chiefest good should have been to get rid of it. Believe me, if *Horace* and *Petronius* had imagin'd him to have been such a one as he is described, they would not have chosen him to be their master in the science of Pleasures

As for what some people pretend of his great piety towards the Gods, 'tis no less ridiculous than the mortification of his senses. Those idle Gods from whom he had nothing to hope or fear, those impotent beings did not merit the trouble of his worship and let not people say, that he went to the Temples, for fear of drawing the Magistrates upon him, and scandalizing his Citizens, for he had much less scandaliz'd them by not assisting at their Sacrifices, than he offended them by his Writings, which destroyed the Gods establish'd in the world, or at least ruined that confidence the people had in their protection.

But now, some one will say to me, What think you of *Epicurus*? you believe neither his friends nor his enemies, his adversaries nor his defenders, what then is your judgment of him? I'm of opinion, that *Epicurus* was a very wise Philosopher, who, according to different times and occasions, loved pleasure in repose, or pleasure in motion, and that this different Pleasure has occasion'd the different reputation he has found in the world *Timocrates* and his other enemies, have charg d him with sensual pleasures, those that have defended him, talk of nothing but of spiritual pleasures The former accuse him of expensive banquets, and I am persuaded that the accusation is well grounded when the latter value him for his eating some little morsels of cheese, in order to make better chear than usual, I believe they don't want reason When one side says, that he argued with *Leontium*, they say true when the other affirms, that he diverted himself with her, they don't misrepresent him *There is a time to laugh, and a time to weep*, according to *Solomon*, a time to be sober, and a time to be sensual, according to *Epicurus* Besides a voluptuous man is not equally so all his life In Religion, the greatest Libertine becomes sometimes the most devout in the study of Wisdom the most indulgent to pleasure, is sometimes the most severe As for me, I look otherwise upon *Epicurus* in youth and health than in old age and sickness

Indolence and tranquillity, that happiness of idle people and sick persons, cannot be better express d, than they are in his writings sensual Pleasure is no less explained in that formal passage which *Cicero* expressly alledges [1] I know, indeed, that all imaginable care has been taken to destroy its credit, and to invalidate it but are mere conjectures to be compared with the testimony of *Cicero* who was so well acquainted with the Philosophers of Greece and

[1] *v* Tusculan Disputations, Bk III ch 18 *passim*

their opinions? It were much better to ascribe to the inconstancy of human nature, the inequality of our minds. Where is a man so uniform as to have nothing unequal, and contradictory in his discourse and actions? *Solomon* deserves the name of *Wise*, at least as much as *Epicurus*, and was equally mistaken in his opinions and conduct. *Montaigne*, when he was a young man, believed that our thoughts ought to be eternally fixed upon Death, that we might be prepared for it [1]: when he came to be old, he *recanted*, and would have us suffer our selves to be sweetly conducted by Nature, that will sufficiently teach us to die.

Monsieur *Bernier*, that great favourer of *Epicurus*, doth now confess, that *after he has studied Philosophy fifty years, he doubts even of those things that he had believed to be the most certain.*[2] All objects have different faces, and our mind, which is in a continual motion, looks upon them differently as it does consider them, so that, if I may be allow'd the expression, we have nothing but new aspects, while we think we enjoy new discoveries. Besides, age brings great alterations in our humour, and by the alteration of humour, is very often introduced that of our opinions. To this we may add, that the pleasures of the senses sometimes make us disrelish the satisfaction of the mind, as too jejune and naked, and that the nice and refined satisfactions of the mind, despise in their turn the pleasures of the senses, as too gross So we ought not to be surprized, that, in so great a diversity of prospects and motions, *Epicurus*, who writ more than any Philosopher, should say the same

[1] *v* Montaigne Essays, Bk I 19 "Let us learn to stand, and combat her with a resolute mind let us remove her strangenesse from her, let us converse, frequent, and acquaint ourselves with her, let us have nothing so much in minde as death "

[2] *v* "Abrégé de la Philosophie de Gassendi II 379 Lyons 1684" [note of Des Maizeaux]

thing in a different manner, according as he might have different thoughts and notions of it

What occasion is there for this general argument, to shew that he had no aversion to all sorts of Pleasures? If you consider his commerce with the Ladies, you'll scarce believe that he spent so much time with *Leontium* and *Themista*, to do nothing but talk of Philosophy with them But if he loved the enjoyment of them as a voluptuous person, he manag d himself prudently, and as he was indulgent to the motions of nature so he disliked that any violence should be offered to it, not always reckoning Chastity for a virtue, but always accounting Luxury a vice He would have sobriety regulate the appetite, and that the present meal should never hurt that which was to succeed *sic præsentibus voluptatibus utaris, ut futuris non noceas*[1] He disengaged Pleasures from the uneasiness that precedes and the distaste that follows them When he fell into infirmities and pains, he fixed the sovereign Good in Indolence wisely, in my opinion, if we consider the condition he was then in, for the cessation of pain is the happiness of those that languish under it As for the Tranquillity of Mind which composed the other part of his happiness 'tis nothing but an exemption from trouble but he who can no longer have agreeable motions, is happy if he can preserve himself from the vexations of pain

After all I have said upon this article, I conclude, that Indolence and Repose ought to make the sovereign Good of *Epicurus*, when he was infirm and languishing but for a man who is in a condition to taste Pleasure, I m of opinion that health shows it self by something more lively than a bare Indolence, as a good disposition of the soul requires something more animated than a peaceable state We live in

[1] Cf Letter 7 *Of Pleasures* We must enjoy the present Pleasures without impairing the future

the midst of an infinite number of Goods and Evils, and with senses capable of being affected with the one, and tormented with the other: without very much Philosophy, a little reason will make us relish good things as deliciously as possible, and instruct us to bear the bad with all the patience we can.

LETTER 70 [Works, 1728 II 363] This letter was written when Bernier, the neo-epicurean disciple of Gassendi, was in England

71

TO MONSIEUR JUSTEL

[1687]

Altho' you have made a resolution never to buy any Books, yet I advise you to purchase that of *Orobio*, a famous Jew, and Mr *Limborch* a learned Christian.[1] Nothing ever appear'd on that subject stronger, more ingenious, or more profound. Monsieur *Gaumin* would have said of *Limborch*,

Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent [2]

and I will say of *Orobio*,

Si Pergama dextrâ
Everti possent, etiam hac eversa fuissent

You will shortly see the Relation of Father *Magaillans*,[3] which is impatiently expected by the lovers of foreign wonders. Those Gentlemen who did not find their account in the plain and rational truths of

[1] "The title of this Book is, *De Veritate Christianae Religionis amica collatio cum erudito Judaeo*" [note of Des Maizeaux] Philip Van Limborch, the Dutch Remonstrant theologian, was born in 1633, and died in 1712. His "De Veritate" was printed at Gouda in 1687, with Orobio's commentary

[2] Virgil, *Aeneid*, II, 292

[3] "Father Magaillans, a Portuguese Jesuit, who died in China in 1677, left a Manuscript, entitled, 'The Twelve

Father *Couplet*,[1] will have amends made em in the exaggerations of this Portuguese, who is fonder of strange things, than rigorously ty d down to real truth They will find in this curious Book the Twelve Excellencies of China in imitation of the Twelve Excellencies of Portugal, which the Author thought fit to present the Chinese with

What sort of Country is that China, according to the account I have had from the sincere and judicious Father *Couplet*! No Corn at Pekin, no Wine in the whole Empire, no Oil of Olives no Butter, no Oysters! There you see Painting without shade Musick without parts wooden Palaces without architecture, many Sciences lost as they pretend, ignorance of almost every thing as we perceive, an Alphabet of sixty thousand letters and a Language consisting of nothing but monosyllables There would have been no Geometry no Astronomy there, if zeal for conversions had not prompted the Jesuits to go thither who owe the toleration of our Religion, next to the grace of God, to the Calendar and Almanacks You see there are a great many things wanting to that renowned Country, but as a recompence for this, their Morals are good, their Policy excellent the People innumerable, the Subjects obedient, and the greatest of Emperors moderate

LETTER 71 [Works 1728 II 405]

Excellencies of China which has been translated out of Portuguese into French and published at Paris in 1688 with this title Nouvelle Relation de la Chine contenant la Description des Particularitez les plus considerables de ce grand Empire [note of Des Maizeaux]

[1] Father Couplet had published in 1688 L Histoire d une Dame chretienne de la Chine ou par occasion les usages de ces Peuples l Etablissement de la Religion etc sont expliquez Saint Evremond had seen Father Couplet in England [note of Des Maizeaux]

[2] i e The Emperor Cam hi.

72

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1687]

I was all alone in my Chamber, and very weary with reading, when one came and told me, *There is a Gentleman who comes from Monsieur de St. Evremond* Judge you if all my weariness was not shaken off that moment. I had the pleasure of talking of you, and was thereby informed of particulars which Letters cannot express, *viz.* your perfect health, and your occupations. The joy of the mind shews the force of it; and your Letters persuade me, that England promises you forty years more of life for I think that it is in England only that they talk of People who have liv'd beyond the age of man. I could have wish'd to have pass'd the remainder of my life with you, had you thought the same way that I do, you would be in this Country now. However, it is very agreeable to remember those persons whom we have loved, and perhaps this separation of our bodies, has been made on purpose to embellish my Epitaph I could have wish'd the young Divine[1] had found me in the *Glory* of *Niquée*,[2] where people never suffer any change; for I believe

[1] "Monsieur Alphonse Turretin, now [*c* 1723] Professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History in the Academy of Geneva" [note of Des Maizeaux] *v* Budé Vie de Jean-Alphonse Turretini, théologien génevois, p 49 Paris 1880 In a letter to a relation Turretini writes "I have had news of M du Boulay from an elderly gentlewoman of his acquaintance, to whom M de Saint Evremond had given me an introduction Her name is Mlle de L'Enclos Her wit is extraordinary and a crowd of distinguished people gather round her every day I visit her sometimes, and have made the acquaintance there of that agreable man, M de Fontenelle, author of 'Dialogues des Morts'".

[2] *v* Amadis de Gaule, VIII, chps 24 and 63 The princess Niquée had excited the passion of her brother Anastarax, who was ignorant of his relationship Niquée's aunt Zirphée



M d Sa nt Ev emond had bl l ely and sparkl g Ey s a
l ge Fore h ad thick Eye Brows h ndsome Mouth a d a
s eer ng smile

Des Maizeau

you think me one of the first persons enchanted in it Don't change your ideas in this matter, which have always been favourable to me, and let this communication, which some Philosophers think better than presence, endure always

I told Monsieur *Turretin* how glad I should be if I could do him any service he has met with some of my friends here, who have thought him worthy of the praises you have given him If he has a mind to converse with the honest Abbots, who remain here in the absence of the Court, he shall be treated as a man whom you esteem I read your Letter before him with Spectacles, but they do not ill become me for I had always a grave mein If he is in love with that *Merit*, which is call'd here *distinguished*, perhaps your wish may be accomplished, for people endeavour to comfort me every day for my losses, by this fine word I understood that you wish'd *La Fontaine* in England [1]

saved the situation by investing her niece with the power of inhibiting the movements of any one who looked at her and by presenting her with a glass in which were revealed the features of Amadis with whom she instantly fell in love Sitting on a throne of unexampled splendour which with other magical effects the good aunt had provided the enraptured Niquee awaited in her glory the arrival of Amadis Anastarax on being led into her presence was overcome by her beauty and remained conveniently petrified until Amadis came and rescued her by breaking the enchanted mirror with his sword The expression Gloire de Niquee will be familiar to readers of Mme de Sévigné's letters

[1] In 1683 Saint Evremond had asked Lady Hervey to visit the poet La Fontaine in Paris and invite him to accompany his old friend Marianne Mancini Duchesse de Bouillon into England When four years later Mme de Bouillon came over on a visit to her sister the Duchesse Mazarin La Fontaine who missed his beloved hostess Mme de Sabliere all but decided to accept Saint Evremond's invitation He stayed behind however at the instance of the princesses de Conti and de Vendome In the late autumn of 1687 Saint Evremond wrote to him If you had been as sensibly touched with the merits of Madame de Bouillon

we have but little of his company at Paris; his head is very much weakened. This is the fate of Poets: *Tasso* and *Lucretius* felt it. I doubt no Love-powder has been laid for *La Fontaine*; for he did not much court Women who could be at the expence of it.

LETTER 72 [Works, 1728 II 422]

73

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1687]

I defy *Dulcinea* [1] to enjoy the memory of her *Knight* with greater pleasure. Your letter had the reception it deserved, and the "sad countenance" has in no way diminished the strength of its feelings. I am touched by their strength and by their constancy. cherish them to the shame of those who think to criticize them. I agree with you that wrinckles are the marks of Wisdom. I am overjoyed that your outward attributes do not distress you at all, I endeavour to behave likewise You have a friend, a Governor in

as we are charm'd by them, you had certainly accompanied her into England, where you would have found several Ladies that know you as well by your Works, as Madame de la Sablière knows you by your Conservation" [Works, 1728 II 387] La Fontaine describes the Duchesse de Bouillon, in one of his letters as "La Mere des Amours et la Reine des Grâces" Towards the end of his life, La Fontaine became feeble-minded and died on the 13th of April, 1695 [*v* Letter 85]

[1] It was Saint Evremond's custom to sign himself, on occasions to the Duchesse Mazarin, *El Caballero della triste figura* Don Quixote, the Knight of the dismal countenance Ninon in this letter playfully defies the Duchesse Mazarin to feel a greater affection for Saint Evremond than herself [*v* Letter 133]

the Provinces [1] who owes all his good fortune to his charms, he is the only old man who does not appear ridiculous at Court Monsieur *de Turenne* [2] only desired to live in order to see him old he saw him the father of a family, wealthy and content He has made more jokes about his latest dignity than the others imagined Monsieur *d Elbène* [3] whom you used to call 'Cunctator", has died in hospital So much for the opinion of mankind! If Monsieur *d Olonne* were alive,[4] and he had read the letter which you wrote to me, he would have kept up your title of 'His Philosopher" Monsieur *de Lauzun* [5] is my neighbour, and he shall receive your compliments I return to you most affectionately Monsieur *de Charleval s* [6]

[1] i e the Comte de Gramont the hero of Hamilton s Memoirs who had been created Governor of the province of Aunis now swallowed up in the departments of Charente Inferieur and Deux Sevres He was about seventy years old at the time and did not die until 1707 at the age of 86 *i* Saint Evremond s epitaph

We may once more see a Turenne
Conde himself may have a double
But to make Gramont o er again
Would cost Dame Nature too much trouble

[2] Turenne had been killed at the battle of Sassbach in 1675
[3] [*v* Saint Evremond s Letters to Monsieur d Hervart *passim*]
[4] He had died on the 3rd of February 1686 at the age of 60
[5] i e The Duc de Lauzun [*v note Letter 27*]
[6] Charles Faucon de Ris sieur de Charleval (1613–1693) a Normand like Saint Evremond was one of Ninon s early lovers and in his old age a frequenter of her *salon* in the rue des Tournelles He had a tender regard for literature all his life The most cultivated men of his age cherished his person and sought the pleasures of his conversation M Scarron who was an intimate friend of M de Charleval s used to say of the delicacy of his wit and of his taste that the Muses fed him on nothing but blanc mange and chicken broth Careless of everything but an inordinate self love he was always a distinguished idler with nothing to do [*Melanges d Histoire et de Litterature* Vigneul Marville I 280 Paris, 1725]

I order you to remind Monsieur *de Ruvigny* [1] of his friend in the *Rue des Tournelles*.[2]

LETTER 73 [Translated for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 V 69]

74

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1687]

Monsieur *Turretin* is extremely obliged to me for making him acquainted with you, and I am not a little obliged to him for giving occasion to the fine Letter which I have just received I don't question but he found you with the same eyes that I beheld you formerly those eyes by which I always knew the Conquest of a Lover, when they sparkl'd a little more than ordinary, and which made us say,

Cytherea ne'er was such, &c [3]

You are still the same to me, and tho' nature, which never spar'd any body, should have spent its utmost

[1] Henri de Massue de Ruvigny (?1610–1689), the Deputy-General of the Huguenots, had retired to England in 1685 after he had tried in vain to prevent the persecutions that culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes [See further note, Letter 128] It is easy to confuse him with his son, who until he was created Lord Galway, was also styled Marquis de Ruvigny, and who, to make matters worse, bore the same christian names

[2] Ninon had occupied a house in this street, close to the Place Royale, since 1657, according to M Émile Magne it is represented to-day by No 36 in the same street

[3] *v* Malherbe "Ode à la Reine, mère du Roi, sur sa Bienvenue en France"

> "Telle n'est point la Cytherée
> Quand, un nouveau feu s'allumant,
> Elle sort, pompeuse et parée,
> Pour la conquête d'un Amant"

In the French editions, this letter is followed by an imitation of Malherbe's Ode "Telle n'était point Ninon" [*v* Œuvres, 1739 V 196]

power to produce some alteration in the features of your face, yet my imagination will still be for you, that *Glory* of *Niquee*, in which you know people underwent no change I am very sure, that as to your eyes and your teeth, you have no occasion for it what you stand most in need of, is my judgment, to understand thoroughly the advantages of your wit, which improves every day You are more witty than ever the young and sprightly *Ninon* [1] was

LETTER 74 [Works 1728 II 424]

75

TO MONSIEUR LE FEVRE, M D

[1687]

I have carefully read the three *Accounts of Siam*, which you sent me, and my opinion of the Authors is as follows

The Chevalier *de Chaumont* [2] gives us but a lame account of the Nations he saw for, being so taken up with his own Character, he could neither satisfy his own curiosity in travelling, nor answer our expectations at his return But whoever aspires at the honour of an Embassy, cannot have a better master than him, for learning the state and nicety that are to be observ'd in the minutest circumstances

Father *Tachard* [3] has the accomplishments of a Missionary for all sorts of Religions, is as capable of planting the faith of the Eastern people in Europe, as that of the Europeans in the East, as fit to make Talapoins at Paris, as Jesuits at Siam

[1] Saint Evremond is here marking the subtle difference between the youthful *Ninon* and the elderly *Mlle de Lanclos* [Cf Letter 88]

[2] In his Relation de l Ambassade de M de Chaumont a la Cour du Roi de Siam Paris 1686

[3] The author of Voyage de Siam des Peres Jesuites envoyez par le Roi aux Indes et a la Chine 2 Vols Paris 1686

The Abbé *de Choisi* [1] tires me much with his Journal of Winds and Courses, but the Letters wherein he speaks of himself divert me. I am overjoy'd to find him take Orders, that so he might be employ'd in saying of Mass, he being otherwise unserviceable on shipboard. He writes naturally; and to do him justice, no traveller is less fond of the *faux merveilleux* or of pretended wonders, than he. He is not displeas'd to shew himself upon a great Elephant, or to appear before the King with the Embassador and the Bishop, nor to confer with Monsieur *Constance* in private: but yet for all that, he does not think the Symphony of that Country the less detestable [2], nor is he a whit better pleas'd with the Chinese Comedy, or the Siamese Opera; nor does he like their Painting better than their Musick As to their refreshments and entertainments, they consist of Hens, Ducks, Hogs, and Rice without end, a very afflicting thing to Monsieur the Abbé's palate, notwithstanding the

[1] "Journal du Voyage de Siam fait en 1685 et 1686" Paris, 1687 Describing the sea-voyage in his journal, the Abbé says "I translate Portuguese with the Pere Visdelon, M Basset instructs me in the religious orders, I study the moon with the Pere de Fontenay, I discuss seamanship with our ensign Chammoreau, who knows a great deal . And when I wish to be really happy, I summon M Manuel, one of our missionaries, who has a most beautiful voice, and understands music as well as Lully" [Quoted by Feuillet De Conches "Causeries d'un Curieux" II 92 n Paris, 1862] Timoléon de Choisy (1644–1721) was a celebrated wit and indulged in fantastic pleasures, amongst which his voyage to Siam was by no means the most extraordinary

[2] Jean Gherardini, the painter, was roused every morning by their discordant music which he describes in his "Relation d'un Voyage fait à la Chine" [Paris, 1700, p 74], as a ground-bass made by a copper bell and a bullock's horn, and a treble by a whistle and two flutes, "as harmonious as the miaulings of cats or the barking of dogs" The Abbé de Choisy had not yet heard this orchestra when he wrote in his Journal "What is Paradise, but a never-ending music?"

mortification to which his new state of life ties him down

Tonquin and Cochinchina are but very inconsiderable those Kingdoms stand in need to be embellish'd by imaginations that are in love with foreign wonders I pass'd from those *Accounts* to *Confucius's* Book,[1] who is the most tiresome Moralist I ever read His sentences are below *Pibrac's Quatrains*,[2] where he is intelligible, and above the *Apocalypse* where he is obscure

LETTER 75 [Works 1728 II 403]

76

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1688]

MADAM

I am not so vain as to ask your approbation and you have too much judgment to give it me, but since ill-humour accompanies exactness of judging, I intreat you, Madam do not censure me generally upon every thing I say nor condemn me for every thing I do If I speak I express my meaning ill, if I hold my tongue, I harbour a malicious thought if I refuse to dispute,

[1] Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive scientia Sinica exposita &c published by Father Couplet in 1687 [note of Des Maizeaux]

[2] The Quatrains moraux of Guy du Faur seigneur de Pibrac (1529–1586) belong to that select class of books which used to be given more often than they are now to good children to make them better (or prigs) and to bad to make them good Madame de Maintenon recalling her obscure childhood for the benefit of the inmates of Saint Cyr describes how she and her companions were sent out into the fields with baskets over their arms containing our midday meal and a little volume of Pibrac's Quatrains from which we were given several pages to learn every day [*p* Conseils et Instructions aux Dames de Saint Cyr I]

'tis ignorance, if I do dispute, 'tis obstinacy or unfairness, if I agree to what is said, no body cares for my complaisance, if I am of a contrary opinion, never was such a contradictious man seen. When I produce good reasons, Madam hates arguers of the case: when I alledge examples, that is her aversion: with relation to what is past, I am a teller of old stories, as to the present, she ranks me among old dotards, and as to the future, an *Irish Prophet*[1] would be sooner credited than I.

As all things have their seasons, Conversation ends, and Play begins, where, if I lose, I am the bubble; if I win I am the sharper; and if I leave off, a clown. If I have a mind to walk I have the restlessness of youth, and rest, to be sure, is the heaviness and drowsiness of my old Age. If I am yet animated with passion, I am call'd an old fool, if Reason governs the inclinations of my mind, I am told that I am in love with nothing, and that no man's indifference was ever equal to mine. Contraries are equally disadvantageous to me, when I intend to amend one thing which you were displeased withal, I do another thing quite contrary, and thereby displease you as much as before. In the condition I am now in, I dread, lest I should commit a mistake; and am afraid, lest I should do right. You never forgive any of my errors, you hate me when I am in the right, and I am so unhappy as to be often the object of your hatred.

This, Madam, is the ordinary treatment I receive at your hands, this is it, that makes me desire your absence. But by thinking of your peevish humours too much, I have not sufficiently reflected on your Charms, nor considered that the greatest of all misfortunes must be that of not seeing you. I have been

[1] i e Valentine Greatrakes, the Irish stroaker, whose comic career Saint Evremond described in "The Irish Prophet A Novel" [see note, Letter 28]

able to tell you the pains I suffer when I am with you, but those which I feel when I am absent from you, are past expression 'Tis not in the power of words to express my grief *I cannot speak, Madam, but I die* [1]

I have ended my Letter, Dying, but the Virtue of your Charms is able to revive those whom your rigour has struck dead The first thing I have to beg of you, Madam, is that you would abate your severity and cruelty towards me, in the new Life that I am going to lead with you Divide the severity of your justice, let part of it fall on Mr *Villiers*, let not your Chaplain [3] be without his share of it, nor let honest *Lot* [4] escape for all her care about your Domestick affairs, let the Princes and the Nobility sometimes take part of the burthen upon them, that the Gentry may have some ease, and, in fine, Madam, let not me be the only person pitch'd upon to bear your anger and passion, to make way for your kindnesses and civilities to others

LETTER 76 [Works 1728 II 360]

[1] A verse of Corneille' [note of Des Maizeaux]

[2] *v* note, Letter 78

[3] A catholic priest called Milon was the holder of this anomalous post Cf Verses to Madame Mazarin in the French edition of 1739 [IV 295–6] and note to same Saint Evremond coming one day into Madame Mazarin s chamber found her kneeling at the feet of M Milon who was seated at first he could not understand what was happening but when he was a little closer he perceived that she had made her Chaplain sit in order to have his ears pierced and that she had cut off the tip of one of them

[4] i e Charlotte de Beverweert

77

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1689]

I am sending to enquire how you are bearing with your injury [1], for myself I am supporting all my losses very well. Mrs *Harvey's* [2] supper party, the royal *Pâté*, and the melancholy of the pathetic *Boufette*, put me into tolerably good spirits. The night was even happier. All last night I dreamt that I was Mademoiselle *Beverweert*. I was very proud of myself in the part of a good and sensible girl. But your confidence in me was the most attractive advantage of my new sex. You showed me your injury; let us pass lightly over what I saw: I have as much reason to praise you, as I was *Beverweert*, as I have reason to pity myself, as I am *Saint Evremond*. Happy those who knew not the perils attaching to that wound! Their alarm would have killed them, and then we should not have been in a condition to rejoice at your recovery. It is not only our death that is bound up with yours, an illness from which you recover is capable of killing all the subjects in your Empire!

LETTER 77 [Translated for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 V 40 The doggerel verse in the original has been omitted]

[1] "Madame Mazarin had injured her thigh in falling" [note in the French edition]

[2] The sister of Ralph, Lord Montagu, widow of Sir Daniel Harvey, Ambassador to Constantinople, and the boon companion of the Duchesse Mazarin Courtin, the French Envoy, speaks of her in one of his dispatches as "the most intriguing and the cleverest woman in England," and it is probably true that she was an important go-between in Charles II's affair with the Duchess In 1683, while on a visit to Paris, she became acquainted with La Fontaine, who dedicated to her his fable of the Fox, the subject of which she is said to have suggested to him

78

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1691]

I have received the letter which you did me the honour of writing, and found in it extremely little sweetness, to speak in gentler terms than you employ I am not surprised, Madam, that my old and battered countenance should bring me into contempt, and cause you pain when it presents it self But what I do not understand is why an affection, as ready and as genuine as mine is, should be the cause of my receiving such treatment when you do not see me

I shall not dispute my qualifications with Monsieur *Bonrepaux*[1], but let him refrain likewise from disputing with me his zeal and care for whatever concerns you You reproach me for my Dissipation as if it were a crime Twice or thrice I have seen Madame *de la Perrine*,[2] otherwhere indeed than at her house,

[1] François d Usson de Bonrepaux we learn from some verses in a letter addressed to him while he was in England by the poet La Fontaine was an official [Intendant genéral de la Marine] at the French Admiralty [Œuvres 1739 IV 424] In December 1685 he had been sent over from France with orders to entice the industrious protestant refugees to return [*t* Receuil des Instructions XXV Angleterre Paris 1929] In another set of verses [*ibid* IV 381] written by Saint Evremond at Windsor he is accused of playing the pirate and carrying off the Duchesse Mazarin with him to London It is clear that Saint Evremond was mildly irritated by the presence of this elderly rival Saint Simon describes him as a very small fat man with an unpleasant accent but a good talker from whom there was something to be learnt and who could even amuse [*t* Memoires ed Boislisle IV 279]

[2] The Marquise de la Perrine a refugee the daughter of M François de Mouginot who has been described as a celebrated physician and a great Wit became the object of Saint Evremond s affections after the Duchesse Mazarin s

but she sings well. I see *Baillon*,[1] who is an excellent performer on the harpsichoid, and many of the Refugees,[2] who know a great many things. I play at Chess with my Lord *Cassel*,[3] and I beat him. At my age there is no place where one is so much at a disadvantage as at home. We must create amusements to rob us, as it were, of our melancholy reflections.

For the rest, Madam, my discretion is ever one of unswerving loyalty to the present Government of the Country in which I live. I am so inconspicuous that it is nobody's affair to know my feelings. You force me to speak of my self I could not speak of you without praising you, and in your present contrary mood, you would be offended, perhaps, by my praises. Seriousness lasts too long, while playfulness would displease you.

I dined yesterday with Mr. *Villiers*[4] at *Parson's*

death [*v* Letters 132–140] Mouginot's second daughter married the Marquis de Cagny, who was mortally wounded in 1690 at the siege of Limerick Little appears to be known of the family except that they were exiled after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes

[1] I have failed to find any account of this person It is possible that a letter has dropped out of the name, and that Saint Evremond is referring to his good friend Barillon, at one time the French Ambassador, at whose house he was a frequent visitor We know that he was so far interested in music as to offer Saint Evremond a hundred pounds for his comedy "Les Opéras"

[2] i e the French Protestants who fled from the country before or had been driven from it after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685

[3] I cannot identify this nobleman, who makes this single appearance in Saint Evremond's correspondence

[4] This is the Hon Francis Villiers ("Villain Frank" of many scurrilous lampoons), who is supposed to have had relations with the Duchesse Mazarin [cf "Advice in a Letter to Mr Frank Villiers", in the Trowbesh Collection of Ballads] He should not be confused with his namesake "Ned" Villiers, created Earl of Jersey 1697

Green [1] His house might be called an enchanted house but for the fact that one eats and drinks extremely well there My Lord *Montagu* [2] must redecorate his lodgings in *Whitehall*, if he wishes to fulfil his resolve to ruin Mr *Villiers* In the old days I knew another kind of ruin that turned up regularly in the month of September Figs, Melons, Peaches, Grapes, Quails, Partridges controlled our appetites, and our appetites our sobriety, so that when September came round, we used to say *Now is the time to ruin our selves* Beware of ruining your self with the Waters Madam, of all the ways of ruination it is the worst Your house in *Saint James's* [3] commonly called by your Courtiers 'the little Palace," will be a marvel, for

[1] In 1691 he bought the cottage of one Dr Iles at Parson s Green in the parish of Fulham which he occupied until his death in 1694 In bygone times, Parson s Green was by far the most aristocratic quarter of Fulham Bowack states that in his day [*c* 1700] it was inhabited mostly by Gentry and Persons of Quality who resided in several very handsome Houses all standing very airy upon a dry clean Green [*v* Fulham Old and New by C J Feret II 87 London 1900]

Ralph Baron Montagu of Boughton Earl of Montagu 1689 and Duke 1705 (1638 ?–1709) one of the greatest courtiers after the Restoration a patron of the arts and creator of Boughton House Kettering [*v* Letters 126 and 127] and Montagu House in London on the site of which the British Museum now stands He was a generous benefactor to Saint Evremond who received from him an annuity of a hundred pounds during his residence in England in lieu of a lump sum of five hundred pounds The lodgings mentioned were in the Cockpit in the royal palace of Whitehall

[3] *v* Letter from Lady Chaworth to Lord Roos May 4 1676

The Duke of York hath bought a new built house of Lord Windsor in Saint James s Park and given it to Madame Mazarin to live in as long as she continues here She supt about ten days agoe with Lady Hervey who is her intimatest friend and the King came in and surprised them [Duke of Rutland s MSS II 28] The Duchess occupied this house until 1692 when she removed to Kensington Square

there is nothing so neat. You will soon have Mrs *Fitzharding*[1] and Mademoiselle *Beverweert* with you. When the Duchesse *Mazarin* and her two friends are together, I challenge the three Kingdoms to furnish the like. If the little *Dealer*[2] comes, and money is not wanting, the angelic content of Madam *de Choisi*[3] were nothing in comparison with yours!

LETTER 78 [Translated for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 V 22]

79

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1692]

I hope you will be so good as to excuse me, Madam, if I do not perfectly give into the generous frankness of your sentiments, which is opposite to the natural

[1] I have not discovered who this lady was A note in the French edition of 1739 (V 108) records her saying that "Kensington was the Cemetery of London, for the air being better there than in London, the sick were commonly sent there, the majority of whom died for being sent too late"

[2] i e the dealer in the game of basset, probably the Frenchman Morin, who is said to have introduced it from France, is intended Cf "The Song of Basset", by Etherege

> "Let Equipage and Dress despair,
> Since Basset is come in,
> For nothing can oblige the Fair
> Like Money and *Morin*"

[3] Madame de Choisy (1600?–1669?), mother of the Abbé de Choisy [*v* note, Letter 75], was a friend of Saint Evremond before his exile, when the *salons* of "Mademoiselle", the Duchesse de Longueville, and Madame de Sablé were the centres of Parisian society Madame de Choisy appears to have belonged to a group of *esprits forts*, or *libertins*, and to have rejected Mme de Sablé's attempts to convert her to jansenism What her "angelic content" was, or what caused it, I am not competent to say

circumspection of my Countrymen, who are enemies to truths that are clear, and boldly declar d My Reasons against a full declaration of your intentions, are these

I am persuaded that all your Acquaintance (for your Friends have not yet shewn themselves) desire nothing more than to have a pretence to cry out against your humour and your conduct tho' the one be very agreeable, and the other very blameless Never give them any handle to wreak themselves upon you tie them down whether they will or no, at least to a decent shew of Friendship which they ought to have for you, with more warmth than they have Always ask money and if none comes, 'tis you who will have cause to complain if you can get it, I engage to furnish you with ten or twelve Reasons for not leaving England each of which will be better than another In fine, give no body any cause or pretext of abandoning you, and be convinced that a too open declaration of your intentions would be very prejudicial to you there, and would not be of any use to you here I have heard you say, Madam, that the Comtesse *de Soissons* [1] never *gave people any opportunity of finding out her secrets* don t discover your sentiments your self If you are resolved to proceed with less precaution, the *Normand* [2] quits his and is ready to enter into your sentiments

LETTER 79 [Works 1728 II 419] This letter was probably written when the Duchess no longer under the protection of the Stuarts found herself in financial difficulties at a time when there was a movement to deport her as an undesirable alien *v* Narcissus Luttrell s Diary [Oxford 1857] July 15 1689 Commons address to be presented to his majestie that the dutchesse of Mazarin be speedily commanded to retire beyond sea William III however took pity upon her and granted her a pension of two thousand pounds a year

[1] The Duchess s sister Olympe Mancini
[2] i e Saint Evremond himself

80

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN
A JUDGEMENT UPON SOME FRENCH AUTHORS.[1]

[1692]

According to your desire, Madam, I here offer you my thoughts on some of our Authors.

Malherbe has always been reckoned the most excellent of our Poets; but more for his turn and expression, than for his invention and thoughts.

We cannot deny *Voiture* the first rank in every thing relating to Ingenuity and Gallantry: 'tis enough for *Sarrasin* to have the second place, to be on a level with the most esteemed of the Antients in that kind.

Benserade has so particular a character, and so agreeable a manner of saying things, that the nicest Criticks can bear with his Points and Allusions

In Tragedy, *Corneille* admits of no equal, *Racine* of no superior; the diversity of Characters allowing a concurrence, if it cannot establish an equality. *Corneille* is admired for the expression of an heroick Grandeur of Soul, for the force of the Passions, and sublimity of Discourse. *Racine's* merit consists in Sentiments which are more natural, in Thoughts that are more clear, and in a Diction that is more pure, and more easy. The former ravishes the soul, the latter makes a conquest of the mind: the latter gives no room for the reader to censure, the former does not

[1] "The Dispute which arose in France about the Antients and the Moderns, was often the subject matter of Conversation at the Duchesse Mazarin's and because Saint Evremond generally took the part of the Moderns, and commended the best French Authors, she engaged him to write his *Judgment* on Malherbe etc" [Des Maizeaux Life Works, 1728 I cxxxiv] For a full account of this celebrated dispute *v* "La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes . . par H. Gillot". Paris. Champion, 1914

leave the spectator in a condition to examine In the conduct of the Work, *Racine* more circumspect, or distrusting himself, sticks close to the Greeks, whom he is a perfect master of, *Corneille*, improving the advantages which time affords, finds out beauties which *Aristotle* knew nothing of

Molière has taken the Antients for his model, and would be inimitable to those whom he imitates, if they were yet alive

There is no Author who has done greater honour to our age than *Despreaux* [1], to make a larger panegyrick upon him, would be to assume the province of his Works, which make it themselves

La Fontaine embellishes the *Fables* of the Antients the Antients would have spoiled *La Fontaine's Tales*

Perrault has found out the defects of the Antients, better than he has made out the advantage of the Moderns To take it altogether, his Book seems to me to be very good, curious useful, and capable of curing us of abundance of errors I could wish the *Chevalier* had told fewer stories, that the *President* had enlarg d his reasons a little more, and the *Abbe* confin'd his within a narrower compass

You would have me speak of my self, Madam, but I shall speak to you of your self If any of those Gentlemen had been in my place, had the benefit of seeing you every day, and receiving the bright hints which you inspire he had surpass'd both the Antients and Moderns But I have improv d this advantage

[1] i e Boileau

[2] Paralleles des Anciens et des Modernes the first volume of which had appeared at the end of the year 1688 and the remaining three before 1697 Perrault was the foremost champion of the Moderns in the celebrated squabble His defence consists of dialogues between an Abbe of genius representing the Moderns a doting pedant the President blind to any merit outside the Ancients and the Chevalier who supports the Abbe s thesis with exaggerated and paradoxical statements

so little, that I don't deserve a place amongst those illustrious persons.

LETTER 80 [Works, 1728 II 417]

81

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1692]

I have not said, nor have wished to say anything to the good little Libraian : one should speak as little as possible about such things The time has come when I have forgotten every thing except my friends. And so you can imagine how surprised I was by your latest questions. What are you dreaming about that you would have me read these Love-letters through Spectacles ? How much better it would be if you would stick to your England, and a little to the friendship that you owe me, and which I deserve on account of the affection I bear you ! *S[carron]* was my friend. The conversation of his wife has given me a thousand pleasures, though I used to consider her too clumsy at love-making. As for details, I know nothing, I have seen nothing, but I have often lent her my yellow room, to her and to *Villarceaux*.

LETTER 81 [Translated for the first time from " Le Conservateur April, 1758 "] This short letter is certainly the most intriguing in the whole correspondance exchanged by Ninon and Saint Evremond It was printed with the latter's letters to d'Hervart (the authenticity of which has never been questioned) in the " Conservateur ", about fifty years after his death It seems that Saint Evremond had written for information concerning the love-affair of the Marquis de Villarceaux with Mme Scarron, who was afterwards the celebrated Madame de Maintenon Ninon herself had been Villarceaux's mistress for three years, according to her biographers the most passionate years of her life While Villarceaux was pursuing Scarron's widow he is said to have painted her as she was sitting naked

after a bath though whether for motives of spite or self satisfaction has never been definitely decided La Beaumelle the first to speak of it [Memoires pour servir à l histoire de Mme de Maintenon 1755 I 198] maintains that it was a combination of the two Mme Scarron having resisted his advances Feuillet de Conches in his essay on Mme de Maintenon [Causeries d un Curieux II 587 *et seq* Paris 1862] doubts the existence both of the love affair and the portrait and concludes his vigorous defence of the Maintenon s respectability by assuming the letter to be a mere joke of Ninon s The incriminating letter however found its way into Emile Colombey s Corréspondance authentique de Ninon de Lenclos and later into Giraud s and Planhol s editions of Saint Evremond s Works The mystery has finally been solved by M Emile Magne who in his biography of Ninon de Lanclos [Paris 1925] reproduces the portrait as it exists to-day in Ninon s Tower at the Chateau de Villarceaux restored to its original state for the Sisters of St Cyr who had bought the picture after Mme de Maintenon s death to spare her reputation had covered its bare limbs with a decent covering of paint In spite of this discovery Ninon s letter remains obscure The reference for instance, to the good little librarian the Abbe de Hautefeuille needs elucidation De Hautefeuille was the son of an Orleans pastrycook from whom he had been rescued by the Duchesse de Bouillon the Duchesse Mazarin s sister who made him her librarian He seems to have been a mild but ingenious man inventing movements for watches which Huyghens the mathematician stole from him and other mechanical toys Four short letters to him from Ninon are printed by Colombey in his Correspondance authentique Paris 1886

82

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1693]

Monsieur *de Charleval* is just dead [1], at which I am so much afflicted that I endeavour to comfort my self

[1] Monsieur de Charleval [*v* note Letter 73] died on the eighth day of March 1693 in the seventy third year of his age [note of Des Maizeaux who is in error over Charleval s age he was born in 1613 and was therefore eighty years old when he died]

by considering the share you will have in my grief I visited him every day. His mind had all the charms of youth, and his heart had all the goodness and tenderness that could be desired in a true Friend. We often spoke of you, and of all the original wits of our time. His life, and that which I lead at present, had a great deal of resemblance In fine, such a loss is worse than death itself. Pray let me hear from you. I am as much concerned about your welfare at London, as if you were here: old friends have charms, which are never so well known as when we are depriv'd of them.

LETTER 82 [Works, 1728 II 421]

83

TO THE ABBÉ DE CHAULIEU
[A Fragment]

[1694]

There's no Comparison but what's injurious to you, there's no advantageous one, which I may claim with reason. That of *Ovid* does not suit with me. He was the most witty and the most unfortunate man of his time. I am not like him, either as to wit or misfortunes He was exiled among Barbarians, where he made fine Verses; but so melancholy and doleful, that they raise as great contempt for his weakness, as compassion for his disgrace. Where I am, I daily see the Duchesse *Mazarin*; I live among sociable people, who have a great deal of merit, and a great deal of wit. I make very indifferent Verses, but so gay, that they make my Humour to be envy'd, while they make my Poetry to be laugh'd at I have too little Money, but I love to be in a Country where there's enough: besides, the use of it ends with our Lives, and the consideration of a greater evil is a

sort of remedy against a lesser Thus you see I have several Advantages over *Ovid* 'Tis true he was more fortunate at Rome with *Julia*, than I have been at London with *Hortensia* but the favours of *Julia* were the occasion of his misfortune, and the rigours of *Hortensia* do not make a man of my age uneasy

LETTER 83 [Works 1728 I cxxxv] Saint Evremond's witty compatriot the Abbe de Chaulieu (1639–1720)—the Anacreon of his age— sent a Poem to the Duchesse Mazarin says Des Maizeaux and with it a Letter in Verse which contained a very delicate Encomium upon Saint Evremond [in which he] compared him to Ovid Saint Evremond replied no less delicately with this letter adding some introductory verses of his own which have been omitted here [Chaulieu's epistle and Saint Evremond's answer are printed in full in Œuvres 1739 V 152 *et seq*]

84

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1694]

It is enough, Madam, that you should deprive me of your table, by your visit to the Waters,[1] without carrying off *Galet*[2] as well, and thus reduce me to the state of being unable to eat even at my own expence Mr *Villiers*, who lives in an enchanted house, could do without it, and yet he finds a meal so essential to life, that he serves excellent ones in a place where the pleasures of the palate could be sacrificed to those of the eyes Judge, Madam, whether I should not seek the former in my lodgings, where I have more work for a cook than for painters and upholsterers In losing *Galet* I have lost everything, I have much reason to complain of you, though the

[1] Presumably to Bath the Duchess's favourite watering place

[2] The Duchess's Cook

memory of the loin of veal you gave me compensates for everything.

Lord *Montagu*, Monsieur *Justel* and Monsieur *Sylvestre*[1] devoured it at my house. Faithful to his Mutton, Lord *Montagu* had some difficulty in enduring the Veal; but when he had eaten some, and I had told him that it had been sent by you, he swore he would eat no mutton as long as he lived, unless you were so kind as to send me some from Bath. The Librarian searched through *Athenaeus*, *Apicius*, *Horace* and *Petronius*[2] for a dish as good as mine, and found none. The Doctor said it was excellent for the sick, and delicious for the sound. I made use of the expressions of your letter to sing its praise, maintaining that the *riverside veal*[3] of the *Commandeurs*[4] and the *D'Olonnes*[4] did not touch it.

Your health was drunk three times. We began with approval, and from approval proceeded to praise, and from praise to admiration. And since affection and pity are commonly mixed with praise, in drinking, we bewailed the misery of your estate, and I had difficulty in preventing a murmur against Providence

[1] Dr Pierre Sylvestre (1662–1718), Saint Evremond's literary executor and the co-editor, with Des Maizeaux, of his Works. He came into England from Holland in 1696 and was enrolled as a member of Lord Montagu's household, a position which procured him a large private practice in London, and the office of Physician to William III

[2] The books in which Justel tried to find a comparison were, presumably (1) "Athenaei Deipnosophistarum sive cenae sapientium Libri XV" of the third century B C (2) "De re coquinaria", attributed to one Caelius Apicius, also of the third century B C (3) Horace Satires Bk II VII 20 *et seq* (4) Petronius "Trimalchionis cena"

[3] In the original, "veau de rivière", the especially delicate flesh obtained from the calves which were pastured in the water-meadows of the Seine near Rouen

[4] i e the celebrated gourmets, the Commandeur de Souvré, the Marquis de Boisdauphin, and the Comte d'Olonne [*v* Introduction]

for making the daughter a widow rather than the mother![1]

LETTER 84 [Translated for the first time from Œuvres 1739 V 136]

85

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1694]

I beg of you, Madam, to tell the Duchesse *de Boüillon* that no person can be more sensible than I am of the honour that she does me by remembering me I don't much pity *La Fontaine's* condition, fearing lest my own may stand in need of pity At his and my age, no body ought to wonder that we lose our Reason, but that we keep it The preservation of it is no great advantage 'tis an obstacle to the quiet of old people, and a bar to the pleasures of young persons *La Fontaine* feels not that disorder which it gives and perhaps he is the happier on that score It is not a misfortune to be foolish, but to have so little time to be so

LETTER 85 [Works 1728 II 425]

86

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1695]

If you have a mind to understand how necessary you are to the World, you may satisfy your curiosity in your short absence There is a Spanish *Concetto* which I would apply to you, if I was not too much

[1] The Duchess's second child Marie Olympe Mazarin was born in 1665 and married at the age of sixteen to the Marquis de Bellefonds who was killed at the battle of Steinkirk in 1692 Saint Evremond regrets that *he* had died instead of the Duchess's intolerable spouse

an enemy to a figurative Style *When the Sun is under an eclipse*, says the Author of the *Concetto*, *'tis to let the World know how difficult it is to be without its light.* Your eclipse makes my Lords *Montagu*, *Godolphin*,[1] *Arran*,[2] and others, feel how hard it is to live without your light I defy all the Spaniards and Italians together, to carry a Figure farther. Every thing lowres at London since your departure. It is not so at Chelsea, where your Philosophy makes you taste a very delicious Retreat. Control the grief of your friends by intervals of presence.

Upon the wings of time grief flies away[3]

Show your self from time to time, or at least let your friends see you at Chelsea[4] *Tuyo hasta la muerte.*[5]

LETTER 86 [Works, 1728 II 427]

[1] Sidney Godolphin (1645–1712), the first Earl, a staunch ally of James II after the Revolution, and at this date (1695) first Lord of the Treasury He married Miss Blague, whom Evelyn mentions so frequently and with such feeling in his Diary

[2] Richard Butler, the fifth son of the first Duke of Ormonde, afterwards Duke of Hamilton, a man of 56 when this letter was written He is described by Hamilton, in whose Memoirs he appears, as having "a singular address in all kinds of exercises, playing well at tennis and on the guitar, and pretty successful in gallantry"

[3] "Sur les ailes du temps la tristesse s'envole" La Fontaine

[4] After she had given up "the little Palace" in Saint James's, the Duchess, after a short residence in Kensington Square, moved into Paradise Row, Chelsea, in 1694 This row of houses had been erected by George Norris in 1691, "they possessed fine roomy panelled interiors, and the outside presented all the charm of a continuous tiled roof and beautiful wood cornice" The Duchess, it seems, occupied No 4, her name appearing on the rate-lists, generally as a defaulter in respect of payment from 1695–1699, the year of her death Paradise Row was pulled down in 1906 to make room for the ugly blocks of flats that now face the Chelsea Hospital in Royal Hospital Road [*v* Survey of London Vol I, 1909]

[5] i e Yours until death



87

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1695]

No Letter had ever given me more pleasure than yours, Madam, provided it had been written to any other but my self The thoughts in it are lively, and the applications happy to my misfortune, all that wit is exercis'd at my expence My *most humble and most obedient Servant*, shows an ingenious displeasure, which puts your most humble and most obedient Servant in despair I could have bore up under a sudden and impetuous anger my patience has often been tried with those kind of movements, but an ingenious and meditated anger quite confounds me, and puts me to fruitless pain to guess the cause of it I examine my self, and the more I study to discover my fault, the more reasons do I find to hope for your good graces If *Parmenio*[1] is guilty of a slip, who can be trusted? If he be innocent, what can we do, what behaviour can shelter us? I will answer for it Madam, *Parmenio* is not faulty in the least

From *Parmenio* one easily passes to the Generals I do not blame those who are alive, but I have hitherto praised none but the dead, and it already appears, that they were praise-worthy The taking of Namur[2] would have excited me to some fine production, but ever since my Star has hid her self,

[1] I have not found the actual source of Saint Evremond's allusion to Parmenion one of Alexander the Great's generals and his friend It refers I imagine to his conduct at the battle of Arbela [*v* Plutarch's Life of Alexander]

[2] Namur was captured by William III at the end of August 1695 an event which was promptly celebrated by a shower of Congratulatory Poems several of which (e g Prior's) were parodies of the celebrated Ode written by Boileau when Louis XIV had taken the same town three years before

and I have been without her influences, my Talents are buried. Here is abundance of idle discourse. If I yet saw one of your Letters signed *Dulcinea*, and I was allowed to sign mine as formerly, *El Cavallero de la triste figura*; what joy should I be in!

Hasta la muerte cannot be forbid me; for it depends upon me to be always, as I shall certainly be, either the *Knight with the dismal countenance*, or *Your most humble and most obedient Servant*

LETTER 87 [Works, 1728 II 428]

88

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1695]

The fine air of Chelsea, and the repose of solitude, leave no room to doubt, either of your health, or of the Tranquillity of your mind. This is the beginning of a Philosopher's Letter, written to a greater Philosopher than himself. He cannot maintain his Philosophy any longer: the remembrance of your displeasure against him has confounded him. He hopes nevertheless, that his innocence and your equity, will allow him to end with *Tuyo hasta la muerte, El Cavallero de la triste figura.*

I was told of a Sparrow, the King of all Sparrows: they say it whistles, is tamer than any that ever was seen, and that it plays a thousand pretty tricks, which Sparrows are not wont to do. This great merit gave me a curiosity to see it. I found in it all that had been said of it, except that rare quality of whistling, which was put off to another time, when it would be in better humour. The lowest farthing was eight shillings: too little for a Nightingale-Sparrow; too much for a common Sparrow, let it be ever so tame

LETTER 88 [Works, 1728 II 429]

89

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1696]

I have received the second Letter which you writ me, which is obliging agreeable, and witty, and in which I find the humour of *Ninon*, and the good sense of Madame *de Lanclos* I knew how the former lived, and I learn from you, after what manner the other lives Every thing contributes to make me regret the happy time which I have spent in your company, and to desire in vain to see you once more I have not strength enough to transport my self over to France, and you have allurements there, which will hinder you from coming to England The Duchesse *de Boüillon* can tell you that England has its charms, and I should be ungrateful my self, if I did not own that I have met with pleasures and comforts in it I am not a little pleased to hear that the Comte *de Gramont*[1] has recover'd his former health, and acquired a new Devotion Hitherto I have been contented with being a good plain honest man, but I must do something more, and I only wait for your example to become godly You live in a Country where people have wonderful advantages of saving their Souls There vice is almost as much against the fashion, as against virtue sinning passes for ill-breeding, and shocks decency and good manners as much as Religion Formerly it was enough to be

[1] The Comte de Gramont fell dangerously ill in the year 1696 of which the King being informed and knowing besides that he was inclined to Libertinism he was pleased to send the Marquis de Dangeau to see how he did and to advise him to think of God Hereupon the Comte de Gramont turning towards his Wife who had ever been a very devout Lady told her Countess if you don t look to it Dangeau will juggle you out of my Conversion [Des Maizeaux s Life Works 1728 I cxxxvi]

wicked, but now one must be withal a scoundrel, to be damn'd in France. They who have not regard enough for another life, are led to salvation by the considerations and duties of this. But there is enough upon a subject, in which the Conversion of the Comte *de Gramont* has engag'd me: I believe it to be sincere and honest. It well becomes a man who is not young, to forget that he has been so. This is what I could never yet arrive to; on the contrary, from the remembrance of my younger years, and the memory of my past vivacity, I endeavour to animate and enliven the sluggishness of my old age. What I find the most troublesome at this Age, is, that hope is lost, hope, which is the sweetest of all the passions, and that which contributes most to make us pass our time agreeably. That which gives me the greatest pain, is my despairing ever to see you: I must sit down satisfied with writing to you sometimes, in order to keep up a Friendship, which has resisted the length of time, the distance of place, and the usual coldness of old Age. This last word regards me; nature will begin with you, to show, that it is possible not to grow old Pray let the Duc *de Lauzun* know that I am his most humble Servant, and enquire whether Madame *La Mareschale de Créqui* [1] has paid him the five hundred Crowns that he lent me; I have been told by Letter a long time ago that she has, but I am not very sure of it.

LETTER 89 [Works, 1728 II 431]

[1] When Saint Evremond left France he entrusted to his friend Créqui certain securities, in return for which Créqui agreed to pay him a yearly sum of 200 Crowns Créqui died in 1687, leaving his widow in charge of Saint Evremond's affairs She, if anyone, therefore, was in a position to repay Lauzun's loan

90

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1696]

Three Words of your Letter, are worth three Volumes *I never was in better health, I never was handsomer in all my life* What you say as to your Health ravishes me, but I am not surprised with what you say as to your Beauty, 'tis what we knew before 'Tis true the air with which you speak it, has an agreeableness above what I can express I was so affected with it that I could not forbear telling it to my Lord *Sunderland*, and my Lord *Mulgrave*,[1] who was with him *Never*, said they, *was confidence so noble, so just, and so well founded* My Lord *Sunderland* added, that all the Sayings of the Antients, and the Moderns, could not come up to it

Whatever benefit I reap from your absence, *viz.* Bath-Mutton Rabbits and charming Letters, whatever trouble and vexation I have to undergo about my Restlessness, my Dogs and Birds, at your return, yet I passionately wish for it My Lord *Montagu* expects to hear of the blessed day of your passing by his Country-Seat[2]

LETTER 90 [Works 1728 III 36]

[1] John Sheffield 3rd Earl of Mulgrave and Duke of Buckingham and Normanby (1648–1721) the patron of Dryden and the bitter enemy of Wilmot Earl of Rochester whom he lampooned in his Essay on Satire as a result of which Dryden was assaulted As King John or the Red Nose Knight he makes frequent and unbecoming appearances in the scurrilous verse of the late seventeenth century

[2] Probably Boughton House in Northamptonshire [*v* note Letter 126]

91

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1696]

I should never be easy, Madam, after the hurry and disorder of your visit, if I did not think that the Duke of *Richmond's* [1] House would drive the scurvy Idea of mine out of your head. How is it possible, that a man, infected with the nastiness of his Dogs, and that of himself, can be endured, by two persons who are cleanly, even to a disease? I am yet more afraid of Mr *Villiers*, than of you: however, Madam, I was extreamly glad to see him, being assured that Monsieur *Milon* [2] did not follow you with that dismal exhortation, with which he has long threatened me. I am preparing one for him to live well, which will be at least as good as that which he is to make me, to die well. I admire the discretion of my Dogs. They that used to devour every body, approach'd you, only to pay you their respects: it was I who taught them this, and it was rather mine, than theirs, that they paid you.

LETTER 91 [Works, 1728 III 37]

92

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1696]

Old men don't sleep much: when they see you go away at ten at night, they don't sleep at all. The night passes with extraordinary uneasiness, lest some

[1] Charles Lennox, the 1st Duke, bastard of Charles II and the Duchess of Portsmouth (1672–1723)

[2] The Duchess's Chaplain [*v.* note, Letter 76]

inconvenience may have befal'n you[1] Not being able, and yet less willing, to give me good nights, I beg the favour of you, not to give me bad ones, that is, that you would be pleased to go away always with Sun shine, without exposing your self to robbers, drunken, or rude people In Italy, *Mustapha*[2] would share your dangers, in England, you must run the risk all alone The Restoration of *the Knight with the dismal countenance*, gives me perfectly new Ideas When I see *Dulcinea* at the bottom of your Letters, the case will be quite another

LETTER 92 [Works 1728 III 38]

93

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1696]

Windsor Mutton says *Hortense*
Must give *Bath* the preference
Windsor shall no more deny
Bath its new supremacy

Her decision is so good
That the Duke of *Nevers* could
Designate you in his rhymes
Tastes High Priest in modern times

Your Mutton, then, shall be served up to the exclusion of every other kind My dinners are chance-dinners, which much resemble those of the *Theatins*,[3]

[1] Madame Mazarin liv d then at Chelsea whither she chose to walk *from town tho late at night* [*note of Des Maizeaux*] —an imprudent habit since the fields which separated the village of Chelsea from Westminster were frequented by foot pads

The Duchess s Turkish boy servant

[3] This order which takes its name from one of its founders Jean Pierre Carasse bishop of Theate [Chieti] was established in Italy in the sixteenth century In July 1648 at the invitation of the Cardinal Mazarin the Theatins formed a community in Paris Like the Apostles they depended

who sit down to table without knowing if they are going to have any thing to eat. For all that, these Providential repasts are sometimes good, with the assistance of those who bring things with them If you want fruit, bring some; if wine, mine is excellent. You will make up for everything; the guests will be only too glad to see you; and I shall be the first, who place all my happiness in so precious a sight It rains nothing but *Parodies*.[1] The last that I sent you is perhaps the one of which Lord *Montagu* wished to speak. As for the other, I do not wish to *criticize* one who can *ostracize*! You are well enough acquainted with the *Ancients* and the *Moderns* to understand that saying,[2] and to apply it.

LETTER 93 [This and the two following letters are translated for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 V 204, 262, 263]

94

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1696]

I have omitted nothing in my search for *Paisible*,[3] and in acquainting him with your wishes. Chance

upon charity and what "Divine Providence sent them for their subsistance" This faith in divine Providence was not shared by the Pope, when he was asked to recognize their order, and it proved for a time a serious obstacle [*v* Histoire des Ordres monastiques Paris, 1715 IV 71 *et seq*]

[1] i e Parodies of the poems celebrating Louis XIV's capture of Namur in 1692, occasioned by its recapture in 1695 by William III

[2] The allusion has escaped me The original text reads "Je ne veux point écrire contre celui qui peut proscrire" It is obvious that Saint Evremond would refrain from any public approbation of poems ridiculing Louis XIV

[3] "An eminent flautist he assisted Saint Evremond in composing music for the Duchesse Mazarin's concerts at Chelsea and composed overtures and act tunes for

has achieved more than my care and diligence I met him and informed that great and lazy musician what you wanted He told me that he desired nothing better than opportunities of attesting his obedience to you in the style of a *well nourished* man, as the Spaniards say, and in terms that he must have picked up in his little library The upshot is that he is going to the *Waters* in a few days, and at his return, he will overlook nothing to console you for the loss of your *Boule* [1]

Your absence makes my Lord *Arran* exclaim, and Mr *Villiers* lament Sir *Robert Thorold*,[2] more judiciously, after having registered his dissatisfaction at not having the honour of your company, told me that he had an excellent ham and some very good wine, that he would wish you to do him the honour of dining with him and with whomsoever you should name, and at whichever *Court* you prefer I valued that more than the exclamations and the lamentations, which could not be greater since they are made at your absence, but they are *verba et voces*, sounds and words Sir *Robert* is substantial! *Hasta*

LETTER 94 [*v* note Letter 93]

King Edward III (1691) Oronoko and The Spanish Wives (1696) also duets for Flutes published in 'Thesaurus Musicus (1693–6) and sonatas and other pieces for flutes published at Amsterdam [Groves Dictionary of Music. Art *Paisible*] Cf Henry Savile to Lord Rochester Nov 1 1677 His Majesty has heard with very great delight Paisibles new compositions [Bath MSS II]

[1] A bullfinch an inmate of the Duchess's large aviary which also sheltered Jacob the starling and Loteret a small parokeet

[2] I have been unable to identify this man but that he was intimate with the Duchess appears in the following line in A Letter from J P to Colonel H [Poems on Affairs of State, Vol II 1703]

Thorold still for Mazareen doth burn

95

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1696]

If you are still determined to honour your servant with your company on Wednesday, be pleased to command a supply of linen and plates for a house where every thing is wanting save the desire to receive you well therein. I have not mentioned the loin of Veal. It is no mere incident in the embellishment of the piece, but the very nature and substance of the Poetical Repast to which you have been gracious enough to invite your self. Its author will supply you with as many mataphors and other figures of speech as you please.

If you wish for fruit, provide it!
'Tis your Host's design,
That his Guests shall drink the Wine
By them selves provided

You will find everything spotless [1]

On, On, my little Roman! [2]
On, Frank, *On Serving-Woman,*
Your Broom in Hand!

LETTER 95 [*v* note, Letter 93]

96

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1697]

I have been enquiring after you above this twelve months of all the world, and no body can tell me

[1] A reference to the Duchess's passion for cleanliness, which made her sweep out her room three times a day

[2] *my little Roman* the original is "*petit Senateur romain*", the nickname, says Des Maizeaux, given by Saint Evremond to one of his valets who wore a solemn expression

any thing of you Monsieur *de la Bastide*[1] told me you were very well, but he adds, that if you have not now so many Lovers as formerly, you are content to have a great many Friends The falsity of this last news, makes me doubt the truth of the first You were born to love all the days of your life There is some resemblance betwixt Lovers and Gamesters, *whoever has lov'd, will always love* If I had been told you were become godly, I could have believ'd it This is passing from a human passion, to the love of God, and furnishing employment for the Soul, but not to love, is a kind of annihilation, which can never suit with your heart's desire

I desire you would inform me about your health, your occupations, and your temper, and this in a very long Letter, which must contain but little Morality, and a great deal of Affection for your old Friend They talk here as if the Comte *de Gramont* was dead which touches me with a very sensible grief If you are acquainted with *Barbin*,[3] pray ask him why he prints so many things under my name which are not mine I have foolish things enough of

[1] M [Marc Antoine] de la Bastide says Des Maizeaux in a note which appears only in the French editions [1739 IV 486] is known for his *Reply* to the Bishop of Meaux for his revision of Marot s Psalms, and other works [including a version of some of Horace s Odes] He left France in 1687 and died in London on March 15 1704 [*v* Saint Evremond s letter to Bastide in Works 1728 II 40]

[2] That piece of News was in effect false Philibert Comte de Gramont died on the 10th of January 1707 86 years old [note of Des Maizeaux]

[3] Barbin the Paris bookseller had begun issuing surreptitious editions of Saint Evremond s works as far back as 1668 Des Maizeaux relates the following story in his Life

A man of Letters going one day to visit an Author who wrote very politely Barbin came up and applying himself to the Author said For God s sake make me some more Saint Evremond you have already made me some which turned to account

my own, without taking upon me those of others. They attribute to me a Piece against Father *Bouhours*,[1] which I never so much as thought of. There is no Writer whom I esteem more than him: our Language owes more to him, than to any Author whatsoever, not excepting *Vaugelas*.[1] I pray God the news of the Comte *de Gramont's* Death, may prove false, and that of your health, may be true. The Holland Gazette says, *That the Comte de Lauzun is to be married*: if that had been true, we should have had an account of it from Paris, besides, Monsieur *de Lauzun* is a *Duke*,[2] and the name of *Count* does not agree with him. If you will be so kind as to write me some account of this, you will oblige me, as well as by offering my respects to Monsieur *de Gourville*,[3] in case you still see him. As for news relating to Peace and War, I ask you none: I neither write any of that nature my self, nor do I receive any. Adieu; the truest and most faithful of your servants would gain very much by your having no Lovers, for he would then be the

[1] The Jesuit Bouhours (1628–1702), author of "Doutes sur la langue française" (1674), and his more illustrious predecessor Claude de Vaugelas (1585–1650), author of "Remarques sur la langue française" (1647), the two most energetic grammarians and reformers of the French language in the seventeenth century.

[2] Lauzun had been made a Duke in May, 1692.

[3] Jean Hérault de Gourville (1625–1703) was involved in the disgrace of Fouquet, with whom he is said to have embezzled immense sums of money. Exiled from the Court for some ten years, he was restored to favour in 1668, and thereafter cut a very splendid figure on the various embassies with which he was entrusted, his sumptuous parties at his château de Saint Maur becoming a byword for all that was most costly and elegant. His friendship with Ninon, which resembled Saint Evremond's in strength and endurance, survived his disgrace, and on his return from exile Ninon faithfully restored to him the fortune he had left in her hands. At the end of his life he used to send wine to Saint Evremond, who returned the favour by gifts of tea to Ninon.

first of your Friends, in spite of an absence which we may call eternal

LETTER 96 [Works 1728 III 38]

97

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1697]

I learn with pleasure, that my Soul is more dear to you than my Body, and that your good sense leads you always to what is best In truth, the Body deserves no further regard, and the Soul has yet some glimmering light that supports it, and touches it sensibly at the remembrance of a Friend, whose lineaments absence has not effac'd I often tell old Stories, in which Monsieur *d Elbène*, Monsieur *de Charleval* and the Chevalier *de la Rivière*,[1] do rejoice the Moderns You have a share in the best Parts but as you are a Modern also I take care not to praise you before the Members of the French Academy, who have declared for the Antients I heard of a *Prologue* set to Musick,[2] which I would fain see upon the Theatre of Paris The Beauty, who is the subject of it,[3] would raise envy in all those who should hear it All our *Helens* have not a right to be celebrated by a *Homer*, and to be always the Goddesses of Beauty I

[1] Of the Chevalier de la Rivière little is known except that he was an intimate of Ninon's neo-epicurean circle which included Charleval and d Elbene He is remembered for his witticisms one of them being a reply to somebody who asked him what one should think of the world to come

Really a man is embarrassed by the number of rumours concerning it! [*i* Historiettes de Tallemant des Reaux Paris 1861 IV 162 n]

[2] Written by Saint Evremond and printed in the French editions *i* Œuvres 1739 V 124

[3] *i e* the Duchesse Mazarin

am now got very high · how shall I descend again? My dear Friend, ought we not to make the Heart speak its own Language? I assure you, that I still love you more tenderly than Philosophy allows. The Duchesse *de Boullon* looks as if she was but eighteen: the Spring of Charms runs in the Blood of the *Mazarins*. Now our Kings are Friends,[1] would not you do well to take a trip hither? This to me would be the greatest Blessing of the Peace.

LETTER 97 [Works, 1728 III 45]

98

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1697]

If I can be of any service to you; if my old Age is any way agreeable to a philosophical Duchess, who prefers *Priams* and *Nestors* to impertinent *Adonis's*; I will take a Coach to come and see you. If my Uselessness for your Interest, and my Disagreeableness for Converse, will dispense with my not performing my ordinary Duty, I shall sit still at my own fire till two a-clock, when I shall have the honour of seeing you.

LETTERS 98, 99, 100 [This and the two notes which follow it are printed in Works, 1728 III pp 43–44]

99

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1697]

The pleasure of seeing you, is the greatest that one can desire, that of waiting for you is not small, and this last I tasted for eight hours together at St James's.

[1] The Treaty of Ryswick, concluding the war of the Coalition of Augsburg, was signed on September 21, 1697

I go away, in order to execute the Commissions which you do me the honour to give me I shall not fail to be with you at the hour appointed, it is too much my Concern not to fail

100

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1697]

As all the world gives you Fruit, I will not be the only person that gives you none Receive Peaches from a man who has no Garden, with as good a heart as he gives you them I ought not to have made use of the word *Heart* that word ought no more to come out of the mouth of a man at my Age, than that of Health But without Heart, and without Health, I am *hasta la muerte*

101

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1698]

I have a sensible pleasure, in beholding young, handsome and blooming persons, who are capable of pleasing and are proper to touch sincerely such an old Heart as mine As there has always been a great resemblance between your Taste, your Humour, your Sentiments and mine, I believe you will not be displeased to see a young Cavalier, who has the art of pleasing all our Ladies This is the Duke of *Saint Albans*,[1] whom I desired to visit you, as much for

[1] Charles Beauclerk the 1st Duke bastard of Charles II and Nell Gwynn a very pretty boy according to Evelyn At the beginning of the year 1698 his twenty eighth year he was sent over to France to congratulate Louis XIV on the marriage of his grandson the Duc de Bourgogne father of Louis XV to Marie-Adelaide de Savoie which had been celebrated on December 7 of the previous year

his own interest, as for yours. If there comes over with Monsieur *de Tallard*,[1] any of your friends, of the merit of our time, to whom I can do any service; command me. Pray let me know how our old friend Monsieur *de Gourville* does. I suppose his affairs go well: if he is ill in health, I am sorry for it.

Doctor *Morelli*,[2] my particular friend, accompanies the Countess of *Sandwich*,[3] who is going to France for her health. The late Earl of *Rochester*,[4] who was my

[1] Camille d'Hostun, Duc de Tallard, Marshall of France (1652–1728) In March 1698 he was accredited as Ambassador to the Court of Saint James

[2] "M Morelli, or rather Moralez, a very clever physician, was born at Cairo His father, who was a Jew, took him to Amsterdam, where he began his studies Afterwards he travelled in France and Italy He was a scholar and well acquainted with the poetry of the Ancients and Moderns . Under an appearance of romanism he was one of the boldest free-thinkers of his age His gaiety and liveliness remained with him until his death, which happened at Kensington in the month of March, 1715" [note of Des Maizeaux in the French edition 1739 V. 275].

[3] Elizabeth, wife of Edward, 3rd Earl of Sandwich (1674–1757) For some account of this celebrated lady who incarcerated her husband at Hinchingbrooke and became a celebrated bluestocking in Paris, see Introduction

[4] John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), a court poet and the companion of Charles II in his debauches. Apart from his obscene verses, and the innumerable ones which have been attributed to him, he is remembered by one or two lyrics of slender beauty, several pungent satires, his patronage of the Restoration dramatists, including, for a time, Dryden, and his theatrical repentance and decease The numerous allusions to him in the popular verses of the age are evidence of the exaggerated reputation he enjoyed, e g

"One man read *Milton*, forty *Rochester*,
This lost his Taste, they say, when h'lost his Sight,
Milton had Thought, but *Rochester* had Wit"
["The Tribe of Levi", Poems on Affairs of State II 1703, p 371]

Cf also a marginal note in a copy of "An Essay on Satire" [B M Harleian MS 7317] "One of the finest men England

Lady *Sandwich's* Father, had more wit than any man in England, my Lady *Sandwich* has more wit than her Father had she is as generous as witty, as lovely as witty and generous Here you have one part of her qualities I shall dwell longer on the Physician than on the Patient

Seven Cities, you know, contended for the birth of *Homer* seven great Nations contended for that of *Morelli*, India, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, Turkey, Italy, and Spain The cold Countries, nay even the temperate, France, England, Germany, have no manner of pretension to it He understands all the Languages, and speaks most of them His elevated, majestick, and figurative stile, makes me think he was born in the East and that he has learnt all the best things that are among the Europeans He loves Musick passionately and Poetry to distraction in Painting he is curious, at least, but whether he is a Connoisseur, I know not as to Architecture, he has friends who understand it he is seriously famous in his profession, and capable of exercising that of others I beg of you to facilitate his acquaintance with all your celebrated men if he has yours, I esteem him happy enough, you cannot make him acquainted with any person who has so singular a merit as you have I think *Epicurus* made one part of his Chief Good, to consist in the remembrance of things past [1] There is no Chief Good for a man of an hundred years old like me, but there are still Consolations left That of my remembring you, and all that I have heard you say, is one of the greatest

ever bred a great and admir d Wit but hellishly debauch d but made a most Extraordinary penitential Exit Mundo An 1680

[1] Saint Evremond may have been thinking of Cicero s conversation with Epicurus [*v* Tusc Disp III 16] Sed traducis cogitationes meas ad voluptates Quas ? Corporis credo aut quae propter corpus vel recordatione vel spe cogitentur

I write you a great many things, which you will not much care for, I do not consider that they will be tedious to you. 'Tis enough that they please my self: I have no reason to think that at this age I can please others. My merit is to content my self; and I am too happy in being able to do it by writing to you. Pray use your interest to get some Wine for me, from Monsieur *de Gourville*. I lodge with Monsieur *de l'Hermitage*,[1] one of his Relations; a very honest man, who fled to England for his Religion I am sorry that the Consciences of the French Catholicks, could not suffer him to live at Paris, or that the scrupulousness of his made him leave it. He certainly deserves the approbation of his Cousin.

LETTER 101 [Works, 1728 III. 46]

102

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1698]

How could you imagine that the sight of a young man, would be pleasing to me? Your Senses deceive you, as to those of others · I have forgot every thing except my Friends If the name of *Doctor* had not given me courage, I should have made you an answer by the Abbé *de Hautefeuille*, and your English folks should never have heard a word of me My porter told them I was not at home, and took your Letter, which gave me as much joy, as any I ever received from you. How desirous you are of having good Wine! and how unhappy am I, who cannot suceed in answering your expectation! Monsieur *de l'Hermitage* could tell you as well as I, that Monsieur *de Gourville* stirs no more out of his chamber · he is

[1] De l'Hermitage, a protestant refugee after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was de Gourville's cousin

pretty much indifferent about all manner of tastes, a good Friend still, but his friends never think of employing him, for fear of disturbing him After all, if by any insinuation, which I do not foresee, I can employ my skill for the Wine, you need not doubt but I will do it Monsieur *de Tallard* was my friend formerly, but great affairs make great men neglect things that are useless to them I was told that the Abbe *du Bois* [1] would go with him, he is a little acute man, who I fancy will please you I have twenty of your Letters in my hands they are read here with admiration You see that a good taste is not quite gone in France I was charmed with that part of your Letter, where you are not afraid of being troublesome, and that you are wise, if you are now only concern'd about your self not but that the principle is false, as to you, that you are not capable of pleasing others any longer I have written to Dr *Morelli* if I find in him all the Learning you speak of, I shall look upon him as a true Doctor

LETTER 102 [Works 1728 III 48]

103

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1698]

I have sent an Answer to your last Letter, Sir, to the Abbe *du Bois's* correspondent, but he being at *Versailles* I am afraid it was not deliver'd to him I should have been very much in pain about your health,

[1] The Abbé [Guillaume] du Bois [1656–1723] came into England [April 1698] being Secretary to Monsieur de Tallard Ambassador Extraordinary from the French Court to King William. He was Cardinal and Prime Minister of France when he died on the 10th of August 1723 [note of Des Maizeaux]

if I had not had a visit from Madame *de Boullon's* good little Library Keeper,[1] who overwhelm'd me with joy, by showing me a Letter from a person,[2] who thinks of me upon your account Whatever reason I had in my sickness, to be thankful to the world and my friends, yet I have met with nothing that affected me with a more lively sense, than that mark of kindness. Do in this matter all that you are obliged to do, since 'tis owing to you that I have received this favour. Pray let me hear from your self, whether you have recover'd that happiness, which people enjoy so little at certain seasons. The spring can never be dried up, so long as you have the friendship of that amiable person, who sustains your life. How do I envy those who go into England! and how should I be delighted to dine with you once more! Is there not something that is gross and mean in wishing for a dinner? The Mind has great advantages above the Body: however this same Body often furnishes little relishes which are repeated, and which relieve the Soul from its melancholy reflections. You have often laugh'd at those which I made; I have now banish'd them all. There is no time for them any longer, when one is arriv'd at the last period of Life: we ought to content our selves with the day in which we live. Near hopes, whatever you may say of them, are full as much to be prized as those which are carried further; for they are more sure. Here is fine Morality for you: I wish you good health; this is the point to which every thing ought to tend.

LETTER 103 [Works, 1728 III 50]

[1] i e The Abbé de Hautefeuille.
[2] i e the Duchesse Mazarin

104

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1698]

The Abbe *du Bois* [1] deliver'd me your Letter, and spoke as well of your Stomach as of your Understanding There are certain occasions wherein we value the Stomach more than the Understanding, and I confess, to my shame, that I reckon you are more happy in enjoying the one than the other I always believ d that your Judgment would be as long liv d as yourself, but we cannot be so certain of the Health of the body, without which there is nothing left but sad Reflexions I find myself insensibly ready to be engag'd in them but I turn to another subject It relates to a pretty Youth, whom the desire of seeing persons of the best note in all Countries has obliged to leave an oppulent Family without a farewell Perhaps you will blame his Curiosity, but the thing is done He understands a great many things, and is ignorant of others, which one of his age ought not to know I thought him worthy of paying his respects to you, in order to make him begin to be sensible that he has not lost his time by going to England Use him well for my sake I have spoke to his elder brother, who is my particular friend, to desire him to go and wait on the Duchesse *Mazarin* and my Lady *Harvey*, since they have been pleased to remember me

LETTER 104 [Works 1728 III 54]

[1] Du Bois returned to Paris in July 1698

105

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1698]

I never saw any Letter that contained so much good Sense as yours does. You praise the Stomach to so much advantage, that from henceforth it will be a shame to have a good Understanding, without having a good Stomach at the same time. I am obliged to the Abbé *du Bois*, for having gained me your Esteem by this advantageous Character. At eighty eight years of age,[1] I eat Oysters every morning · I dine heartily, and sup tolerably. Heroes are celebrated for less merit than mine

When I was young, I admir'd nothing but the Pleasures of the Mind, being more indifferent about the Concerns of the Body than I ought to have been: now, I make amends, as much as is possible, for the wrong I was guilty of, either by the use I make of the Body, or the esteem and friendship I have for it. You followed a quite other method. You had some regard for the Body in your youth; at present you are employ'd only about what concerns the Mind. I know not whether you have reason to value it so much as you do. I can scarce read any thing that is worth retaining, I hardly hear any thing said worth listening to · how miserable soever the Senses are at my age, yet the impressions that agreeable Objects make upon them, do affect me much more sensibly, and we are much in the wrong to go about to mortify them. 'Tis perhaps a jealousy of Mind, that looks upon their lot to be better than its own.

Monsieur *Bernier*, who was the prettiest Philosopher I ever knew, (*pretty Philosopher* is not a common expression; but his Make, his Stature, his Manner,

[1] Saint Evremond was actually only 82 years old in 1698

and his Conversation, gave him a just title to that Epithet), Monsieur *Bernier*, I say, speaking of the Mortification of the Senses, said to me one day, "I will entrust you with a Secret with which I would not entrust Madame *de la Sabliere*, nor even Mademoiselle *de Lanclos* whom I take to be of a superior kind, I'll tell it you as a secret, *That Abstinence from Pleasure appears to me a great Sin* [1] I was surpriz'd with the Novelty of the System, it left however some impression upon me If he had continued his discourse perhaps he had made me relish his doctrine Continue to me your Friendship, which has never been impair'd a rare thing in so long a Commerce as ours has been!

LETTER 105 [Works 1728 III 55]

106

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1698]

The Comte *de Clerembaut* [2] gave me a sensible pleasure, when he told me that you thought of me, which I really deserve because of my constant affection to you We shall deserve the praises of Posterity

[1] Colombey [Correspondance authentique de Ninon de Lenclos 1886 p 129] has exposed the irony of this remark by recalling the retort which Mme de la Sabliere is said to have made to a relation who seemed shocked that she was always engaged in love affairs and who observed that even animals only enjoy them at a particular season Why it is so because they *are* animals!

[2] Philippe de Clerembaut was one of the few persons whom Ninon de Lanclos received in the last years of her life doubtless in memory of his father the Comte de Pallau an old admirer Clerembaut committed suicide in 1704 according to Saint Simon by drowning himself in the Danube at the battle of Blenheim

for the duration of our Life, and that of our Friendship. I fancy I shall live as long as you. I am sometimes weary with doing always the same thing, and I commend the Swiss who drown'd himself for that reason. My Friends often check me on this score, and assure me, that Life is desirable, so long as we enjoy Tranquillity and a sound Mind. Strength of Body gives us other thoughts, one would prefer that to the Strength of the Mind: but every thing is useless, when we cannot make any change, 'tis as good to avoid Reflexions, as to make any that are of no use. My Lady *Sandwich* has given me a thousand satisfactions, by the happiness I had of pleasing her. I did not believe that upon my Decline I could be a fit Companion for a woman of her age She has more Wit than all the women in France, and more true Merit. She is going to leave us, which makes every one grieve that knows her, and me particularly. If you had been here, we should have made entertainments worthy of the old days. Madame *de Coulanges* [1] has undertaken to make your Compliments to the Comte *de Gramont*, by the Comtesse *de Gramont* [2] He is so young, that I think him as light as when he hated sick people, and lov'd them after they had recovered their health. Every body that comes from England, speaks of the Duchesse *Mazarin's* Beauty, as they talk here of that of Mademoiselle *de Bellefonds*,[3] which is now in the bud. You have wedded me to the

[1] Marie-Angélique de Coulanges (1641–1723), "La Mouche", cousin of Louvois and Mme de Sévigné, and one of the most elegant letter-writers of the seventeenth century After some misgivings, she became a great admirer of Ninon in her old age [*v* Mme de Sévigné Letters, *passim*]

[2] i e Elizabeth Hamilton (1641–1708), "la belle Hamilton", sister of Anthony Hamilton, who wrote her husband's Memoirs, the celebrated "Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont", of which she is the heroine

[3] Marie-Madeleine Hortense Gigault de Bellefonds, the child of the Duchess Mazarin's daughter Marie-Olympe She

Duchesse *Mazarin*, and I cannot hear of her welfare without pleasure *Adieu*, Sir, but why is it not with us a *Good Day* We must not die without first seeing one another

LETTER 106 [Works 1728 III 58]

107

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1698]

You will be so kind, if you please, to come at two a clock to the parlour, whither you did not disdain to come, in the Marquis *de Crequi's* time There you will find a little space cover'd with sweet herbs I think my Lord *Ranelaugh*[1] promised to be there I formerly had the reputation of knowing good Wine, and good Eating very well as to Fruit, I confess my ignorance, and I am too old to learn new knowledge, too happy, if I have not forgot that which I have already learnt To honour your Grace is what knows and shall always know *hasta la muerte el Cavallero* &c

LETTER 107 [Works 1728 III 50]

married in 1708 the Marquis De Pervaque Mme de Coulanges in a letter to Mme de Grignan (1702) speaks of her as a pretty girl but with nothing of the Mancinis but their beauty

[1] Richard Jones 1st Earl of Ranelagh (1636?–1712) a neighbour of the Duchess at Chelsea where he owned large estates Burnet described him in his history as he had known him when he was a young man of great parts and as great vices In Hamilton's Memoirs he appears as a lover of Saint Evremond's old friend Mrs Middleton

108

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1698]

My Lord Duke of *Devonshire*[1] told *Brunet*[2] that he would fain have the honour of taking leave of you, before he went to his Country-Seat,[3] that he was very sure some people had endeavoured to give you bad impressions of him, which he did not deserve. My Maxim is, not to be pleas'd with abundance of things, and to show nothing of it. Threatning one's enemy is delivering one's self up to him; or making those our enemies who would not otherwise be so, when we show them we are displeas'd with them. God rejects the lukewarm, but the world must bear them. My Lord *Devonshire* would not have suffered a Fox to have eat his belly, as the young Lacedemonian did, without saying any thing. He has shewn no steadiness; but there had been no great harm in speaking.

[1] William Cavendish, the 1st Duke (1640–1707), who combined the dignity of statesmanship with fits of unruly conduct For dragging a Colonel Culpepper out of the King's presence by the nose he was fined the exorbitant sum of £30,000, which, it is hardly necessary to say, was never paid "He projected the new glorious Pile at Chatsworth" [which is referred to later in the letter] He composed the following epitaph for his own tomb "A Faithful Subject of Good Princes, A Hater of Tyrants, and hated by them" [*v* "A Sermon preach'd at the Funeral of the Duke of Devonshire with some Memoirs of the Family of Cavendish, by White Kennet, D D, London, 1708]

[2] This is possibly Michael Brunet, the protestant refugee, who with his wife and two daughters came into England early in 1688

[3] Chatsworth, in Derbyshire, the building of which (1687–1706) was supervised by the Duke himself, and of which Dr Kennet says "The Situation seems to be somewhat horrid, but upon review, this really adds to the Beauty of it The Valleys open with greater Amazement and the Rocky Hills hang over in a more awful guard"

He would have been forgiven, and I fancy you will forgive my Lord *Dorsett* I approve your resolution of living without debt, and comfortably Money and Merit, are not incompatible things and even tho' they should not well agree together, it would be worthy of you, to make them good friends You have the latter in perfection, and I wish Fortune may give you the other You would make better use of it than any one alive

I send you a new Book of *The Actes of Henry the Great*,[1] which is very well writ, and very entertaining If the Author had not inserted in it the whole *Confession of Monsieur de Sancy*, under the Title of *The King's Manifesto upon his Divorce*, I should esteem it very much

LETTER 108 [Works 1728 III 52]

109

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1698]

My Lord *Godolphin*, having business which he must necessarily attend and not being able to go a fishing according to appointment, that diversion is put off to another time My Lord *Ranelagh* has undertaken to acquaint you of it, but however, for the more security, I write you word of it my self The first

[1] This is possibly Histoire des Amours de Henry IV avec diverses lettres ecrites à ses maitresses et autres pièces curieuses [By the Princesse de Conti] But it is difficult to reconcile Saint Evremond's statement that it was a new book in 1698 for it had been printed at Amsterdam thirty five years before Brunet [Manuel du Libraire] mentions another Amours de Henri IV Cologne 1730 of which an earlier edition Amsterdam 1695 exists I have not seen a copy of this book which may be the one Saint Evremond sent to his Duchess

of these Lords has sent me six Rabbits in order to deliver them to you : one would imagine I was speaking of a Letter. The Pacquet being large, I have kept one Rabbit to pay the carriage, or rather the duty of intelligence. I wish all givers of intelligence, were as modest in their fees, as I am in mine . one in six is little enough in all conscience. My Lord *Arran* either would not, or could not explain to me the English which is in your Letter : he says he is unhappy in Love, unsuccessful in Courtship, and goes backward in Politicks ; and that King *James* is not more unhappy in losing his three Kingdoms,[1] than he is, in having no farther admission into your house As I am not very lucky in ending my Letters, I shall say bluntly *Hasta.*

LETTER 109 [Works, 1728 III 53]

110

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1698]

'Tis too long, to be two days without hearing from you. I have enquir'd after you twice a day at St. James's, without hearing any thing of you . you will be so kind as to let me hear from you, by the little Senator [2] If you are well, I cannot be ill. Hitherto your Health, has been the cause of mine · I wish that influence may last very long If your Fields, which are more fertile and not so much scorched by the Sun as that of *Montiel*,[3] yield you any small Beans, you

[1] James II, after the Revolution of 1688, had fled to Saint Germain in France, where Louis XIV allowed him to establish his Court

[2] *v* note Letter 95

[3] Giraud maintains, without any show of authority, that Montiel was a country seat of Lord Montagu's, at which Saint Evremond was staying I have searched in vain for evidence to support his statement The celebrated Field of

would please an appetite which, for its irregularity, may be called a Fancy You understand well enough, what is meant by Montiel's Field, so that I need not explain it to you I leave *Don Quixot* there, and only borrow from him *hasta la muerte*, with which I commonly end my Letters

LETTER 110 [Works 1728 III 53]

III

TO THE DUCHESSE MAZARIN

[1698]

The dreadful Retirement that you mention to me, cannot be more so to you, than it is to me When you are content I am satisfied, when you have occasion to lament your Condition, that is a reason for me to lament mine I expect from your Constancy and Resolution, that you will yet bear with patience the bad State of your Affairs for some time, and from your good Sense, that the Illusion of deceitful and imaginary Goods will gain no power over your mind Don't lose your hopes, Madam, for your Troubles and Difficulties will have an end Leave off Beer,[1]

Montiel in Spain was the scene of the duel between Henry the Bastard and his legitimate brother Don Pedro whom the Black Prince had set upon the Spanish throne And it was Don Quixote (whom Saint Evremond pretended to be) who forsook the voluptuous down and mounting his famous steed Rozinante entered [at the beginning of his quest. Part I ch II] the ancient and celebrated plains of Montiel

[1] Towards the end of her life the Duchess who was reduced almost to penury had taken to drinking beer and spirits the latter it is said injured her health and hastened her death [*v* Œuvres 1739 V 157 where Saint Evremond reproaches her in verse for her addiction to absinthe and usquebas] Evelyn recording her death in his Diary June 11 1699 says that she is reported to have hastened her death by intemperate drinking of strong spirits

drink your Wine, and let *Mustapha* [1] drink, that his usual Inspirations may come upon him. This will do you more service against bad fortune, than *Seneca's Consolation to Marcia* [2]

LETTER III [Works, 1728 III. 57]

112

TO MATTHEW PRIOR

London. August 25 (o.s.) [1698]

I owe all your kindness, and the desire you have expressed to help me, to your good nature, not to any merit of my own, without your natural generosity no virtue I possess could deserve the favour you have shown me The Duc *de Lauzun's* sympathy may have contributed something, but since it is I who am to benefit from it, it is up to me, Sir, to return you all the thanks I can. Your kindness to me has honoured me with your acquaintance, which I value more than the kindness itself. I should consider my self fortunate if I could meet with an occasion of attesting my indebtedness

P.S. Be so kind as to have my letter presented to Monsieur the Duc *de Lauzun*, and assure Monsieur *l'Ambassadeur* and his Wife that I am their very humble servant

LETTER 112 This letter is printed and translated for the first time from the original manuscript in the Prior Papers [Hist MSS Comm Bath MSS III Prior Papers IV 76] Matthew Prior, the poet, was envoy at Paris in 1698, and, as the letter shows, was anxious to assist Lauzun in his efforts to help Saint Evremond to return to France

[1] Mustapha, the Duchess's Turkish page, whose antics were a constant source of entertainment to her

[2] "Ad Marciam de consolatione" (A D 40)

113

TO MONSIEUR SYLVESTRE

[1698]

What Monsieur *de Bauval* [1] has written to you on my behalf is as obliging as it can be, and I beg you, Sir, to express to him that no man could be more sensible of his obligations than I am I have not yet read the *Criticism* of what they are pleased to call my "*Works*" [2] There are many of those little pieces which are mine, many more which are not, and in those which are really mine, you would not believe how many things have been added or removed I am not afraid of Criticism in the least, when it is just, I shall correct my self, when it is not, I shall console my self that the critic may not be right But what I fear is the '*Apology*,' [3] which you spoke of Since Monsieur

[1] M de Bauval who had that Book [see note *infra*] transmitted to him deferr d giving an account of it in his Journal [Histoire des Ouvrages des Savants] till he was sure that Saint Evremond would not take it amiss He wrote therefore to Dr Sylvestre and let him know at the same time that some body at Paris was writing an Answer to that Criticism [Des Maizeaux 1728 I cxli]

This incompetent examination of Saint Evremond s style was printed at Paris in 1698 the author Cotolendi disguising himself on the title page under the name Dumont I have not seen the original edition The title page of my own copy reads as follows Reflexions sur les Divers Stiles et sur la Maniere d ecrire ou Dissertation sur les Œuvres de Monsieur de Saint Evremont avec l Examen du Factum qu il a fait pour M la Duchesse de Mazarin Suivant la Copie de Paris A Amsterdam MDCC It is thought remarks Des Maizeaux that M Erard [Duc Mazarin s advocate] being nettled by Saint Evremond s Answer to his Pleading had a share in this book

[3] A reply to Cotolendi s dissertation written by a lawyer M Boyer de Ruvière was printed in Paris six months later with the following title page Apologie des Œuvres de St Evremont, avec son Eloge et son Portrait et un

de Bauval has friends and informants everywhere, and since his merits have won him great credit with all the Men of Letters, he would oblige me exceedingly by preventing the publication of this zealous *Apology*.

The praises of one's enemies are to be feared; those of one's friends more so. I have no reason to dread yours. Monsieur *de Bauval* gives me some which I have not deserved, but so skillfully and with such charm, that a man with less philosophy than I have would find it hard to resist them.

LETTER 113 [Translated in full for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 V 268 Some passages were translated by Des Maizeaux and quoted in his Introduction to Works, 1728 I cxli]

114

TO MONSIEUR SYLVESTRE

[1698]

I send you back the *Criticism* on my *Works*: I have perused it with attention, and, after all, am at a loss whether I ought to complain of, or thank its Author. To go about, as he says, to undeceive people, who for fifty years have been imposed upon by my Writings, is to shew a zeal for the Publick which is not very obliging to me but, at the same time, 'tis making me a sort of Conjurer, and perhaps there may be more merit in thus deceiving the Publick for so many years, than in undeceiving them.

The stress of this Criticism chiefly consists in taking notice of my intricate Expressions: and I might take

Discours sur les Critiques, auquel on a joint plusieurs Lettres et Fragments de Poesies qui n'ont pas encore été imprimées A Paris, chez Jacques Collombat. mdcxcviii Avec Privilège du Roi" [For Saint Evremond's opinions of the Criticism and the Apology, *v* Letter 113]

his Censure for a good piece of advice, since it concerns me to have my Thoughts understood I'll give him Counsel for Counsel not to make his Thoughts so clear, for they are too easily seen thro' Common things make us regret the time we bestow in perusing them, whereas delicate Thoughts give a nice Reader a satisfaction, both in his own Judgment and Taste

I own, I contradict my self sometimes I commend Constancy in a Lady whom I believe to have an affection for me and I advise her to be fickle, who has a kindness for another Lover I am neither of the same humour, nor the same opinion at sixty years of Age as I was at thirty, or at fourscore, as I was at sixty Another Contradiction this!

After all, I find in that Criticism several things justly censured, many Digressions on occasion of what he says, on what he rehearses out of the Bishop of *Meaux*, the Bishop of *Nismes*, Monsieur *Despreaux*, Father *Bouhours*, and other Moderns I cannot deny he writes well but his Zeal for Religion and good Morals exceeds all, and I should gain less by exchanging my Style, than my Conscience with his

I have a great value for his exactness in Criticism He makes it his business to censure even Treatises, that are none of mine, and Faults in such as are, that I never committed Tis true, he sometimes gives me too much Praise so that all things consider'd, the Favour he shews me, exceeds the severity of his Censure and I may sincerely aver, that I entertain more gratitude for his mildness, than resentment for his rigour He may already have the satisfaction to see how I improve by his lessons of Christianity Authors never forgive, no not the Philosophers, nor even the Saints yet as ignorant as profane as I am, I not only forgive Monsieur *Dumont*, but take his Criticism kindly I should not think my self so far oblig'd to one that should write my *Apology* for I hate indiscreet Zeal and am more ready to disown

what might be said to my praise, than to my discredit.[1]

POSTSCRIPT.

There has just fallen into my hands the *Apology* of what they call my "*Works*." I have glanced through it, and thought very highly of the *Essay on the Critics*.[2] The author writes well, but I do not recognize myself in the portrait he has drawn of me In honouring me less, he would have disfigured me less. For all that I am much obliged to him for his care and enthusiasm I could exempt myself from gratitude by saying that he has written less about me than about another person.

LETTER 114 [Works, 1728 I cxlii]

115

TO MONSIEUR SYLVESTRE

[1699]

The Duchesse *Mazarin* is so much indispos'd, that she cannot write to you with her own hand, and therefore she borrows mine, and commands me to tell you, that you have obliged her extreamly by sending her news of your self, and of your little Caravan.[3] She was touched with your hard lot at Antwerp, in having nothing to drink but Burgundy, no Beer, no Moselle Wine, no Bourdeaux: she lamented your misfortune. My Lord *Montagu* had the Sentiments of a true Father who sends his Son to travel. As for me, who am accused of Indifference, and sometimes

[1] For an account of the books mentioned in this letter, see note to Letter 113

[2] "Discours sur les Critiques", pp 1–24 of the edition of 1698

[3] Sylvestre had been engaged by Lord Montagu to travel with his son Lord Monthermer through France and Italy

of Hard heartedness, I was very glad that my Lord *Monthermer* [1] accustom'd himself to fatigue betimes The Duchesse *Mazarin* can hardly conceive how a Caravan can return without bringing home with them Monkeys and Parrots You found at Amsterdam a young Monkey, so little, and so tender, that it could never have pass'd the Sea You saw at Breda a wonderful Ape, which the Owners would not part with No Town but had its Rarity, of which you give as good an account, as the most exact German Traveller could have done Let those who want Monkeys and Gammons of Bacon, apply to Merchants you travel as a man of Curiosity, and I doubt not but your Journal will be well fill'd

After I had wrote my Letter, the Duchesse *Mazarin* has been informed that Monsieur *Pujolas* [2] has met with a very troublesome Accident, which affected her very much, as well as me You don't seem as if you design'd to return very speedily From an Inspector of Gardens and Buildings, you will become for some time longer an Inspector of Life and Manners If you return, bring Monkeys and Parrots, if you go to Rome, bring Pardons and Beads

LETTER 115 [Works 1728 III 59]

[1] John Viscount Monthermer and at his father's death in 1709 2nd and last Duke of Montagu He was sixteen years old when he went abroad for his education In 1705 he married Lady Mary Churchill the youngest daughter and co heiress of the Great Atossa was Lord High Constable of England at the coronation of George I and died in 1749 in his sixty seventh year

[2] There were several protestant refugees of this name I am inclined to think that Henri Pujolas is intended here He was minister of the French church at Parson Drove in 1692 but what the accident was I cannot say

116

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1699]

How great a Loss have you sustain'd, Sir![1] If we were not to be lost ourselves, it is impossible we should ever be comforted. I heartily condole with you; you have lost an amiable Commerce, that supported you in a foreign Country. What can be done to retrieve such a misfortune? They who live long, are liable to see their Friends die. After this, your Parts, your Philosophy, will serve to support you. I am as much touched with this death, as if I had had the honour of the Duchesse *Mazarin's* acquaintance. She thought of me in my sufferings: I was touched with that goodness; and her being so dear to you, made me love and esteem her. There is no remedy for this misfortune; nor is there any against that which happens to our poor Bodies Take care of your's. Your Friends are pleased to see you so healthy and so wise; for I reckon those wise who know how to make themselves happy. I return you a thousand thanks for the Tea you were pleased to send me. The Humour and Gaiety of your Letter pleased me as much as your Present. You will soon have my Lady *Sandwich* with you again,[2] whom we behold with

[1] "Madame Mazarine died this morning at eight o'clock, after giving some hopes of her recovery these two or three last days It is what we all must do, the later the better" Lord Jersey to Matthew Prior, Envoy at Paris Whitehall, June 22 [July 2 n s] 1699 [Bath MSS II 364] Evelyn was probably mistaken in entering her death in his Diary under June 11, though rumours of her death had been circulating since the beginning of June

[2] Lady Sandwich, who had been seriously ill in Paris, recovered under the treatment of Morelli and returned to England in the early summer of 1699 Cf Lord Jersey to Matthew Prior June 16, 1699 "I hope my Lady Sandwich is

abundance of grief just on her departure I wish her manner of life may afford you some consolation I don t know the English way, but this Lady has been very much French here Adieu, Sir, a thousand times If one could think like Madame *de Chevreuse*, who fancied when she was dying, that she was going to chat with all her Friends in the other world, one might receive some comfort from such a thought

LETTER 116 [Works 1728 III 61]

117

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1699]

Your Letter has fill'd me with unprofitable Desires, which I did not think myself any longer capable of *The days pass away*, as good *Des Yveteaux*[1] said, *in Ignorance and Laziness, and those days d ftroy, and deprive us of those things which we are fond of* You experience this in a cruel manner You formerly said *That I should die of nothing but Reflexion* I endeavour not to make any more and to forget to morrow the time which I live to day Every body tells me, that I have less reason to complain of time than another But however this be, if any one had propos d such a life to me, I should have hang'd myself And yet notwithstanding we cling to an ugly Body, as much as to an agreeable one we love to feel ease and rest I have still a pretty good Stomach I wish to God I had an opportunity of trying my stomach with yours, and of talking of all the Originals that we have known,

quite recovered Pray persuade her to come home but only because it is home I promised her to talk of Paris to her and I shall very faithfully keep my word with her [Bath MSS II]

[1] See note Letter 52

the remembrance of whom rejoyces me more, than the presence of abundance of people which I see; altho' there be something good in all this, but in reality, no resemblance Monsieur *de Clerembaut* often asks me, whether he resembles his Father, as to his Parts? I tell him, *No:* but I hope from his Presumption, that he believes this *No* is to his advantage, and perhaps some people may think so. What Comparison is there betwixt the present Age, and that which we have seen! You will quickly see my Lady *Sandwich*, but I am afraid she goes into the Country. She knows all that you think of her. My Lady *Sandwich* will tell you more News of this Country than I She has examin'd and sounded every thing to the bottom. She perfectly knows all my haunts, and has found the way not to be a stranger here.

LETTER 117 [Works, 1728 III 62]

118

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[1699]

The last Letter I receive from Madame *de Lanclos*, seems to me to be always the best: and this is not because the sense of the present Pleasure prevails above the remembrance of the past, but the true Reason is, because your Mind receives new Improvement and Vigour every day If it be with your Body as it is with your Mind, I shall but ill maintain the struggle you mention for the best Stomach. I was willing to make a trial of mine against that of my Lady *Sandwich*, at a great Entertainment at my Lord *Jersey's*;[1] and I was not worsted. All the world knows my Lady

[1] "Ned" Villiers, 1st Earl (1656–1711), a familiar name in the satires of Charles II's reign Like his contemporary Etherege he sobered down in middle-age, became a Lord-Justice in Ireland, Secretary of State, and Lord Chamberlain

Sandwich's Wit, and I am convinc'd of her good Taſte, by the extraordinary eſteem ſhe has for you She did not get the better of me in the Praiſes which ſhe gave you, any more than in Appetite You are of all Countries, as much eſteem'd at London as at Paris You are of all Times, and when I alledge you for *the honour of mine, the young people immediately* name you to give the advantage to theirs Thus you are Miſtreſs both of the preſent and the paſt, I wiſh with all my ſoul you may have a conſiderable power over the future! It is not Reputation that I have now in view, this is ſecur'd to you in all times I am thinking of a thing that is more eſſential, and that is, Life of which eight Days are more worth, than eight Centuries of Glory after death *If any one had formerly propos'd to you to live as you now do, you would have hang'd your ſelf*, (the Expreſſion charms me) and yet you content yourſelf with *Eaſe* and *Quiet*, after having taſted the moſt lively Pleaſures

There is not one who has a greater value for Youth than I have as I have nothing of it but the remembrance I follow your example, and make the moſt of the preſent that I can Would to God the Duchesſe *Mazarin* had been of our mind! for then ſhe ſhould have been alive ſtill but ſhe would needs die the greateſt Beauty in the world My Lady *Sandwich* goes into the Country ſhe goes from hence as much admired at London, as ſhe was at Paris Live, for life is good when it is without pain Pray ſend the enclos'd Billet to the Abbe *de Hautefeuille* at the Duchesſe *de Boüillon's* [1] I ſometimes ſee the Abbe *du Bois* friends, who complain he has forgot them pray aſſure him of my moſt humble Reſpects

LETTER 118 [Works 1728 III 64]

[1] The Duchesſe de Bouillon lived in Paris in the rue Neuve des Petits Champs

119

NINON DE LANCLOS TO SAINT EVREMOND

[1699]

Wit is very dangerous in friendship! Your Letter would have undone any one but my self. I know your lively and surprising Imagination; and I was even forc'd to call to mind that *Lucian* has writ in praise of a *Fly*,[1] in order to make your Stile familiar to me. I wish to God you could think of me, what you say of me! I could dispense with all Nations. And, indeed, 'tis to you that the glory of all this is to be ascrib'd. Your last Letter is a master-piece: it has been the subject of all the conversations that have been had in my chamber this month. You return to youth: you do very well to love it. Philosophy suits well with sprightliness of Wit. 'Tis not enough to be wise, we must likewise please at the same time; and I am well assured, you will always please, so long as you think as you do. Few people are able to resist old age I fancy I am not yet sunk under the weight of it. I could wish with you, that the Duchesse *Mazarin* had regarded life in itself, without thinking of her face, which would have been lovely to the last, tho' good sense had come in the room of some fewer charms. My Lady *Sandwich* will always keep up the force of her Wit, when she loses Youth; at least I am of that

[1] I cannot refrain from quoting the following passage from a nineteenth century newspaper, communicated to me by Mr C E Laurence "The resurrection of flies by burial in cigar ash must not be put down to the credit of the nineteenth century It was known one thousand seven hundred years ago to Lucian who writes "'If a little ash is strewed on a dead fly the creature will undergo a complete rebirth, which should be satisfactory proof of the immortality of the fly-soul, since the latter is able to return to its body, take possession of it, animate it, and cause it to fly away'"



NINON DE LANCLOS IN HER OLD AGE

[T fac p g 346

mind Adieu, Sir when you see the Countess of *Sandwich*, make her remember me, for I should be much troubled to be forgotten by her

LETTER 119 [Works 1728 III 67]

120

TO THE MARQUIS DE CANAPLES

[1699]

You could not give me better proofs of your Friendship, than upon this Occasion, when I want the tenderness of my Friends and the fortitude of my own mind to support me If I were but thirty Years of Age, it would be difficult for me to retrieve such a charming Conversation, and old as I am, it is altogether impossible Yours, my Lord, and that of some Persons who are still concern'd for me, would indeed be a great relief to me at Paris, and I should go over and seek it without delay, if the Infirmities of extreme Old Age were not a great obstacle to it Besides, what should I do at Paris, but either hide my self, or appear with various horrors about me, often sick, always infirm and crazy? It might be said of me, what Madame *de Cornuel*[1] said of a certain Lady *I should be glad to know the Church-Yard where she goes to renew her Skeleton*[2]

[1] Anne Marie de Cornuel (1605–1694) a lady celebrated for her witty repartee and the hostess of one of the seventeenth century *salons* [*v* an account of her in Tallemant des Reaux's Historiettes Paris 1861 VI 228 *et seq*] Tallemant also gives a selection of her witticisms [IX 46–57] though he does not include the one quoted in this letter Among them he mentions her calm riposte to a robber who attacked her alone in her coach and began fumbling in her bosom

There's nothing for you there my friend I have neither pearls nor breasts

[2] This Lady who had naturally a pale meagre Countenance appear'd sometimes with a fresh lively red Complexion &c [note of Des Maizeaux]

These are good reasons for me not to leave England. The strongest is, that the small Estate I have, could not cross the Sea with me, for it would be impossible for me to draw it from hence. 'Tis true it's next to nothing, but then it's upon that nothing I live. The Duchesse *Mazarin* ow'd me once eight hundred Pounds sterling, of which she died four hundred Guineas in my debt. Indeed, she dispos'd of what I had more than my self. The extremities to which she was reduc'd, are not to be conceiv'd However, I'd freely give all I have left, so that she were still alive. You lose in her one of your best Friends, and you can't imagine how much she is regretted, both by private Persons, and the Publick. She had an indifference for Life, that there's reason to believe she was not sorry to part with it.[1] The English, who excel all other Nations in the point of dying, ought to look upon her with envy

LETTER 120 [Works, 1728 I cxlv] Des Maizeaux, in his *Life*, relates how this letter came to be written After the Duchesse Mazarin's death "his Friends renew'd their sollicitations to him to return They thought the Death of this Lady had broke the ties which bound him so fast to England, and that he would be very glad to come and live with his old Friends, and forsake those Places which only fed his sorrow" Louis XIV. had granted permission in 1689 for Saint Evremond's return

121

TO THE MARQUIS DE CANAPLES

[1699]

I know not, Sir, whether you have received the Letter which I did my self the honour to write to you, to return you my most humble thanks for the most

[1] This remark has been taken by some people to imply that the Duchess committed suicide [Cf page 345, ll 24–7]

obliging offers that could be made I wish I was in a condition to accept of them Nature, to which I have had so much reason to be grateful, is just upon the point of withdrawing her favours, and of treating me as she did the Duchesse *Mazarin* This was unmerciful to Madame *Mazarin*, who was as handsome as ever, and the same as she was when you saw her she was very little concern d for the injustice that Nature did her, for never person died with so much resignation and resolution I mourn for the Loss of her every day She often repeated a Verse of *La Fontaine*, which, I doubt not, she had made use of with regard to me, but which I cannot with regard to her

Upon the wings of time grief flies away

I wish I could do what she would have done, and what I shall never be able to do The consideration of what she owed me has no part in my Complaints When I reflect that the Niece and Heiress of Cardinal *Mazarin* had need of me on certain occasions for her subsistence, I make Christian Reflexions, which will be for the good of my Soul, if they are of no effect towards my Payment

LETTER 121 [Works 1728 III 66]

122

TO THE SIEUR BARBIN

[Winter, 1699]

I am very much obliged to you, Sir for your good opinion of the trifles that have dropp'd from my pen, which people are so kind as to call my '*Works*' If I was of an age in which my imagination could furnish me with such, whatever they might be I should not fail to send them to you, the beauty of the Impression would recommend them But the little Genius I

once had, is so worn out, that I find it very hard to make any use of it, even for things that are necessary to life. It is not for me now to mind my pleasure and diversion; my only concern is, to live

You desire I would inform you what belongs to me in the small Pieces which have been printed under my name. There is scarce any of them in which I have not the best share; but I find them either quite altered or enlarged. The *Great Bells of St. Germain des Prez*, which *Luigi* [1] admired, do by no means belong to me. This is the first Addition I can think of. The *Charms of Friendship*, the long *Letter of Consolation to a Lady*; the *Reflections on the Doctrine of Epicurus*, the *Eloquence of Petronius*, and some others which I do not remember, do not belong to me in the least

If I were young and handsome, I should not be ill pleased to see my Picture at the beginning of a Book: but it would be making a scurvy present to the Reader, to give him an old and ugly Portraiture of a man of eighty-five years of age

My Eyes fail me, I can neither read nor write, but with much pain. You will excuse me that I cannot give you a more exact account of that which you inquire of me

LETTER 122 [Works, 1728 I cxlvii] "I solicited him several times to publish his Works," says Des Maizeaux, "but he always declined, and I was afterwards informed that his Friends could never prevail with him to do it He told me himself, that the Marquis de Saissac had offer'd him three hundred Guineas, if he would give them to him with a short Preface, in which he should own them to be genuine Monsieur de Barillon, the French Ambassador, would have given him a hundred Pounds for the single Comedy of the Operas"

[1] i e Luigi the musician Barbin had inserted this piece in the "Réflexions sur les Opéras" The other pieces, with the exception of the *Letter of Consolation*, were included by Des Maizeaux in an appendix "of the best Pieces attributed to Saint Evremond", in his edition of 1728, Volume III, pp 360, 279, 177, respectively

That Barbin after the gross piracies he had already committed should have had the impertinence to try his hand again is an excellent example of commercial dishonesty He went still further for early in 1700 he again published a collection of Saint Evremond's works Nouvelles Œuvres meslees of which Des Maizeaux observes that what was properly Saint Evremond's made but one third of the Volume the rest serving only to swell it out which was Barbin's practice He adds however a mitigating clause by that means he has recovered several Pieces of which Saint Evremond had no Copy and which would have been lost

123

TO NINON DE LANCLOS

[New Year's Day, 1700]

The letter which you wrote to me on the 14th of October was delivered to me in the month of December It is rather out of date, but good things are welcome how ever late they arrive I am delighted with your seriousness, you have given pleasure to *Seneca*, who is not used to receive it You call yourself old with all the charm of feeling and wit of a young person I have a curiosity which you can satisfy When you remember your Youth does not the recollection of the past sometimes suggest to you ideas, as far removed from the langours of idleness as from the tumults of passion? Do you never feel in your heart a secret opposition to the calm of mind you imagine yourself to have acquired?

To be loved by those you love
In and out of season
Is a sign your feelings move
In Harmony with Reason

Love for us shall never cease
Till Death brings us our release
It dies and so do we
May the gererous Fates above
Grant you thirty years of Love
And of Philosophy

That is what I wish you on New Year's Day, a day on which those who have nothing to give, send wishes instead of gifts.

LETTER 123 [Translated for the first time from Œuvres, 1739 V 357]

124

TO MY LORD MONTAGU

[1700]

No Person can be more sensible than I am of the honour of being remembered by you. There is not one word in your Letter that does not please me, except where you tell me, that you eat Truffles every day. I could not forbear crying, when I thought of my eating them with the Duchesse *Mazarin*, I represented her to my self, with all her charms I thought I was at *Boughton*[1], the Nile and the Crocodiles appear'd to me.[2] I cannot continue this Discourse without sorrow; and therefore I must give it over. My Lady *Sandwich* has been at Windsor these nine or ten days. I sent her your Letter: if she returns to London, as 'tis probable she will, I shall not fail, my Lord, to tell her of the Musick and the Truffles that wait for her.

I doubt not but Dr. *Sylvestre* has caused those Pieces of *Corelli*,[3] which he brought with him, to be play'd

[1] Lord Montagu's seat in Northamptonshire *v* note, Letter 126

[2] "The Marquis d'Heucourt and M de Saint Evremond being at Boughton, their Servants went a fishing in the Ponds, and saw some Pikes so large, that they took them to be such Crocodiles as are found in the Nile, and ran away for fear of being devour'd by them" [note of Des Maizeaux]

[3] Arcangelo Corelli, the violinist and composer (1653–1713) The pieces brought over from Italy by Dr Sylvestre were probably Corelli's *Opera* 4 and 5, published respectively at Bologna and Rome in 1694 and 1700, consisting of twenty-

over, which will make us despise the *Chaconne* of *Galatea*, and the *Logistill* of *Roland*[1] We expected Dr *Sylvestre* would be all upon his Architecture and Painting, but he has deceiv'd us, for *Corelli* has taken the place of *Michael Angelo*, and of *Raphael* I wish the Doctor would be so kind as to translate for me some chapter of the Author, who teaches us the way not to die[2] I have no hopes but in him All the Doctors, Apothecaries, and Surgeons, are angry to distraction at him for disposing of Death to their prejudice I wish my Lord, I could profit any thing by his instructions and live the *Mille Años*[3] of the Spaniards, that I might continue so long your most humble and most obedient Servant

LETTER 124 [Works 1728 III 68]

four sonatas for violins and dulcimer Corelli lived in the Cardinal Ottoboni's palace at Rome for the last thirty years of his life conducting the celebrated Monday concerts and giving lessons to pupils who came to him from every country in Europe

[1] i e the Chaconne from Lulli's Acis et Galatee (1686) Roland another of Lulli's operas based on Ariosto's Orlando furioso was produced in 1685 I am indebted to Dr Sanford Terry for his help in explaining the word *Logistill* which is not to be found in any dictionary Saint Evremond is referring apparently to the 5th act of the opera the scene of which is laid in the palace of the good fairy Logistilla *Logistill* I therefore presume refers to some celebrated passage in this act which is largely devoted to her singing

[2] This was that eccentric barrister John Asgill who published in 1700 a pamphlet entitled An Argument that Man may be Translated into Eternal Life without passing through Death in which he strenuously maintained that it was possible for Christians to pass from mortality to immortality without the inconvenience of dying

[3] i e a thousand years

125

TO MONSIEUR SYLVESTRE

[1700]

Be satisfied, Sir, with your merit of Inspector, and don't encroach upon mine. I leave you your Architecture and Painting, but pray don't disturb me upon the *Geography of Good-eating*.[1] However I must confess, that your Heath-Cocks, your Oysters, your Salmon, your Fruits, and the rest of that delicious abundance which you mention to me, give you some right to insult me, and leave me no relief, but in attributing all your advantages to the direction and magnificence of my Lord. *Let but a thing please my Lord* Montagu, *and don't trouble your head any further: whatever expence is to be made, whatever care, whatever industry is to be employed to have it, you will be sure not to go without it.* These are the very words of the late Duchesse *Mazarin*, which are as good as Oracles, and which were never more just than on this occasion. I never desired any thing so earnestly as to go to *Boughton*, to see my Lord, the good Company and Learning in its full lustre, when Monsieur *le Vassor*[2] is there: I

[1] *v* Saint Evremond's verses to Mr Villiers in Œuvres, 1739, v 53, in which he begs Villiers to patronize an imaginary book he proposes to write, entitled "La Gourmande Géographie" Sylvestre, who was living on the fat of Lord Montagu's land at Boughton, was disposed to disagree with the exclusive praise given in those verses to Oysters and Truffles

[2] Michael Le Vassor (1648–1718) was brought up in the Catholic faith, which he afterwards renounced In 1695 he escaped from the persecutions in France and settled in England, where Bishop Burnet obtained a pension for him from William III He wrote many books, including paraphrases of the New Testament, and a history of Louis XIII From a remark in "Nouvelles Littéraires de la Haye," vol 8, it appears that he held a benefice in Northamptonshire which would account for his presence at Boughton

do not look upon my self as any thing, because I don't understand Greek

LETTER 125 [Works 1728 III 73]

126

TO MONSIEUR SYLVESTRE

[1700–1701]

If my new infirmities, or rather my old ones which are very much grown upon me had not hindered me from going to *Boughton*,[1] I should have been as happy as a man almost a hundred years of age can be I lose

[1] Near Kettering in Northamptonshire 1 Views of the Seats of Noblemen etc London 1824 by J P Neales Second Series, Vol I Ralph Montagu during his residence as Ambassador at Paris spent some time at Versailles the then recently built, magnificent residence of Louis XIV From that model he formed his ideas of building and gardening and in this mansion as well as in Montagu House London which he also erected displayed all that gorgeous splendour of decoration of which the French style admits Being particularly esteemed by King William that monarch honoured him with a visit at this seat October 24 1695 when his Majesty and the whole court were entertained with the greatest magnificence

The Seat at *Boughton* is particularly observable for its spacious elegant and delightful Gardens and for its sumptuous Water works Below the Western Front of the House are Three more remarkable Parterres the Parterre of *Statues* the Parterre of *Basins* and the *Water* Parterre wherein is an Octagon Basin whose Circumference is 216 Yards which in the middle of it has a *Jet d Eau* whose Height is above 50 Feet surrounded with other smaller Jets d Eaus On the North Side of the *Parterre* Garden is a small Wilderness which is call d the *Wilderness* of *Apartments* an exceeding delightful Place and nobly adorn d with Basins Jets d Eaus Statues with the *Platanus* Lime Tree Beech Bayes &c all in exquisite Form and Order To the Southward of the lower part of the *Parterre* Garden

a thousand pleasures which are all to my taste. That of seeing the fine House, the fine Water-Works, the fine Ducks, would have pleased me extreamly, altho' I be but an indifferent Inspector. But you will easily guess the greatest of all, and that is being with my Lord *Montagu*, to enjoy his conversation twice a day, before and after the best cheer in the world. No Person ever merited to be more magnificently receiv'd, and more handsomly entertain'd, than my Lady *Sandwich*; no man was ever more proper to receive and entertain her well, than my Lord *Montagu* I hope the Cascade, the Octogon, the Water-Sheafs, and the Water-Spouts, shall have made my Lady *Sandwich* forget France. And as my Lord is very happy in inspiring his taste and his designs as to Buildings and Gardens, I don't question but she will soon undertake

is a larger *Wilderness* of a different Figure, having Ten equidistant Walks concentring in a round Area, and adorn'd also with Statues In one of the Quarters is a fine Pheasantery The larger Trees upon the Sides of the Walks have Eglantine and Woodbind climbing up and clasping about the Bodies of them The *Canal* at the Bottom of all, is about 1,500 yards in length in Four Lines falling into each other at Right Angles At the lower end of it is a very Noble *Cascade* The Walls, on each side of the Cascade at the Head of the Basin that it falls into, are adorn'd with *Vases* and *Statues* The Cascade has Five Falls The Perpendicular about Seven Feet A Line or Range of Jets d'Eaus in number Thirteen, are placed at the Head of the Cascade, and possess the Interval where the Water enters upon its first Fall These throw *up* their Water, as that of the Canal descends a very agreeable and charming Entertainment both to the Eye and Ear, and a lovely Refreshment to the Standers-by, in a hot and sultry Air There are also several Jets d'Eaus in the Basin underneath Also the Knot of regularly-figur'd Islets beset with Aquatick Plants, there call'd the *Decoy*, is extremely handsome and pleasant' [*The Natural History of Northamptonshire* by John Morton London, 1712, p 491] A plan of the gardens, which occupied upwards of a hundred acres, is preserved in the King's Library at the British Museum

some new Work at *Hinchinbrooke* [1] which will not be behind those of *Boughton*, in any respect It is impossible for any one to be more sensible than I am of the honour of her remembrance There was nothing wanting to perfect my grief, for not having seen *Boughton* and the Master of the place, but my not having seen *Hinchinbrooke*, and its Mistress, who is the greatest ornament of all the places where she is

If the poor Duchesse *Mazarin* had been yet alive, she would have had Peaches, of which she would not have fail'd to give me a share, she would have had Truffles, which I should have eat with her, not to mention the Carps of *Newhall* [2] I must make up the loss of so many advantages by the Sundays and Wednesdays of *Montagu House* [3]

LETTER 126 [Works 1728 III 74]

[1] i e Hinchingbrooke the seat of the Earls of Sandwich at the gates of Huntingdon There is a legend that Lady Sandwich shut her husband into a room of the house which for many years was called the Starved Chamber denying him sufficient food and forbidding any one to see him There is no record that she undertook any improvements to the house or gardens

[2] Newhall in Essex a royal residence in Henry VIII s reign It became Lord Montagu s property through his second wife the widow of Christopher Monk 2nd Duke of Albemarle whose father the illustrious George Monk had been presented with the house for his services to Charles II She was a confirmed lunatic and Montagu only married her for the vast possessions she inherited from her father the Duke of Newcastle *v* MSS of the Duke of Buccleuch I Letter from Newcastle to Albemarle Dec 14 1684 I am perfectly of your Grace s opinion there is no place so fit and proper for my daughter in all respects as your Grace s noble house of New Hall it is the best house the best seat and the best furnished of any subject s house in the kingdom and I esteem it more convenient for anybody that takes physic than if it was within four miles of London

[3] On the site of the present British Museum Montagu had rebuilt it after a disastrous fire which had occurred in January 1685–6 after Lord Devonshire the tenant had given a great ball there

127

TO MONSIEUR SYLVESTRE

[1700–1701]

You cannot imagine the joy I was in when I saw the Pye was come Besides that a Partridge-Pye is considerable in itself, it recall'd to my mind the idea of my Lord *Montagu*, of you, and of all the good company at *Boughton*; and made me imagine in a lively manner all the Beauties there, which I have not seen, and of which I am informed by all those who have been there. My Lord *Galway* [1] who is a good judge of every thing, told me that the Cascade of *Boughton* is the most perfect and finish'd one he ever saw: that there are greater collections of Water at *Versailles* and *Chantilly*, but that if he was to give a model of those kinds of Works, he would give that of the Cascade of *Boughton* in preference to all others. Monsieur *le Coq* [2] has made a description of it in a

[1] Henri de Massue de Ruvigny (1648–1720), created Earl of Galway, 1697, for his military service in Ireland, after he had been driven from France by the protestant persecutions He was a close friend of Saint Evremond, who made him his executor and left him in his will £60 to buy a memorial ring In a "Character", written for the Electress Sophia in 1703 he is described as "one of the finest Gentlemen in the army, with a head fitted for the Cabinet as well as the Camp, is very modest, vigilant and sincere, a man of honour and honesty, without pride or affectation, wears his own hair, is plain in his dress and his manners"

[2] *v* Evelyn Diary Oct 2nd, 1689 "Came to visit us one Monsieur le Coque, a French refugee, who left great riches for his religion, a very learned, civil person, he married the sister of the Duchesse de la Force" François le Coq, sieur de Germain, who at the age of 17 could translate Greek at sight, was imprisoned with his wife during the 'dragonnades', and allowed to go into exile in 1685

very long Letter and the Marquis *de Montandre*[1] talks of it almost after the same manner that they do

If my Lord sent me the Pye of his own proper motion, he makes me one of the most presumptuous men in the world even tho you had put him in mind of it, yet I should still have a very great obligation to his Lordship, and should not be displeased to lie under many more of that kind to him I am afraid there may be a sort of ingratitude in making such nice distinctions Whatever vanity there may be in it, I am willing to believe that my Lord thought of me first himself and that you put him in mind from time to time of his design

After I had written my Letter, Monsieur *La Pierre* arriv d who gave me eleven Peaches, *which are worth eleven Cities* to speak like the Spaniards, when they would highly commend the presents they receive The pains which I feel this minute, bring my distemper to my mind I wish you had cured me with the Diet of *Boughton*, the Partridges Truffles, *&c* If you were here your Looks alone would do There is no distemper that can hold it against the *corpuscula, effluvia, emanationes, simulacra sanitatis* which flow from your eyes I wish with great impatience to receive the effects of them

LETTER 127 [Works 1728 III 90]

[1] François de la Rochefoucauld on his brother s death in 1702 Marquis de Montandre (1672–1739) a protestant refugee He became a Lieutenant Colonel in the English army accompanying Lord Galway to Portugal At the end of his life he was highly favoured by George II

128

TO MY LORD GALWAY [1]

London, August the 29th [1701]

My Lord,

I have not done my self the honour of writing to your Lordship, since his Majesty gave you a Regiment [2]: you wou'd doubtless have been so obliging as to answer me, I was willing to save you that trouble, and only desired the Marquis *de Montandre* and Monsieur *Boyer* [3] to assure your Lordship that no body in the world can think himself more interested in what concerns my Lord *Galway* than my self.

As to Monsieur *de Puyzieux*: in my opinion he acts very wisely to fall in with the bad taste now in fashion, concerning Champagne Wine, in order to sell his own the better I cou'd never have thought, that the Wines of Rheims cou'd have been changed into Wines of Anjou, by their colour and their haishness. There ought to be a haishness in the Wines of Rheims: but a harshness with a colour, which turns into a sprightly tartness when it is ripe The Tartness is amorous of it, and it is not to be drank till the end of June. You have formerly been a Lover, and perhaps you think I prophane the word *amorous*. However, it is the term used by the Connoisseurs, the *D'Olonnes*, the

[1] Henri de Massue de Ruvigny [see note, Letter 127] was created Earl of Galway in 1697, for his services in Ireland

[2] "The King had given him a Regiment of Dutch Horse Guards" [note of Des Maizeaux] *v* Luttrell's Diary June 27, 1700 "The Earl of Galway is made General of the Dutch Forces, and Colonel of the blue regiment of footguards, lately commanded by the Duke of Wirtemberg"

[3] Abel Boyer (1664–1729), a protestant refugee, came to England in 1689 He became the tutor of the infant Duke of Gloucester, who died in 1700 when he was 10 years old Boyer is remembered by his "Royal Dictionary French and English" 1699

Boisdauphins, and by your humble Servant, formerly renown'd for their nice palate [1] We can never have good Champagne, without a good body, let our modern Vinedressers say what they will *Tocane* must be left to the Wines of Ay The Wines of Sillery and Roncières used to be kept two years, and were admirable but for the first four months, they were nothing but Verjuice The Wines of Burgundy have got such an ascendant, notwithstanding all that I have said and written, concerning the Wines of Champaigne,[3] that I dare not name them any more You cannot think how much I am mortified at it

Let Monsieur *de Puyzieux* order a little Vessel of Wine to be managed the same way it was done forty years ago, before the vitiated taste crept in, and send you some of it

Monsieur *de Puyzieux* was very young when I left France, yet I had the honour to know him, tho' my chief acquaintance was with his Father, in whom I lost a very good friend, and a dozen bottles of his best Wine, which he us'd to order me every winter by *Gautier* his Merchant in England

You will oblige me my Lord, by making my compliments to Monsieur *de Puyzieux*, when you write to him I respect him both for his Father's merit, and his own

I am so touch'd with yours, that I need not recall that of Monsieur *de Ruvigny*,[4] to assure you that I

[1] The French text reads *Coteaux autrefois renommés* For an account of the application of the expression *coteau* to the renowned gourmets Saint Evremond d Olonne and Bois dauphin *v* Introduction

[2] Virgin Wine which comes first of itself from the Grapes without pressing [note of Des Maizeaux]

[3] For notes on these wines *v* Saint Evremond s Letter to d Olonne No 43

[4] Henri Massue de Ruvigny 1st Marquis and father of the Earl of Galway (1610?–1689) He was elected Deputy General of the Reformed Churches in 1653 and was Envoy

shall dispute with all the world the sentiments of esteem and friendship which are due to you. I honour your virtue, your good qualities, your philosophy, and your great talents of every kind. With these sentiments I always think of your Lordship, and am, my Lord, your most humble and most obedient servant, and subaltern in Philosophy.

LETTER 128 [Works, 1728 III 70]

129

TO PRINCE MAURICE D'AUVERGNE [1]

[1702]

I had always heard that Friendship never ascended; an opinion founded on some observations, that Fathers love their Children, better than they are beloved by them As to Fathers, I have nothing to say against it, but I find the Proverb to be false by my own experience, with regard to Grandfathers. The Friendship of my *Grand-child*, does not stop at the first degree, it ascends with all its force, till it arrives at the *Grand-Papa* [2] What does one do in order to

Extraordinary to England from 1674–1676 After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes he settled in England and for 3 years welcomed the protestant exiles at his house at Greenwich "A cordial and agreeable Friend, whose intimacy is solid, whose Familiarity is pleasing, and whose Conversation is always sensible and improving" [*v* "A Conversation between Saint Evremond and the Duc de Candale" Works, 1728 II 17]

[1] Emmanuel Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne, son of Frederic-Maurice de la Tour, Duc de Bouillon, Turenne's brother His brother, the second Duc de Bouillon, married Marianne, the Duchesse Mazarin's sister "He died, says Des Maizeaux, at the Hague in March 1702, a few days after Saint Evremond sent him this Letter"

[2] "Prince Maurice used to call M de Saint Evremond his Grand-Papa" [Note of Des Maizeaux]

please him? one gives excellent Wine at London, one sends the best Tea from Holland, one writes first I could push this *One* very far, but I chuse to quit that manner of writing in the third Person, which was introduced at Court by Monsieur *de Turenne*,[1] and has been kept up after his death by those that belong to his Family, I chuse to quit it on purpose to upbraid you directly, thereby to shew you the tenderness of a *Grand Papa* How could you leave England, to go into Holland, and get a Fever? If you had staid at London, our Doctor[2] had certainly prevented your Distemper by the ordinary diet which he prescribes, and observes himself He would have order'd for you in your own Chamber a Health Soup, with a good Capon, a knuckle of Veal, Sellery and Succhory[3] He would have order'd two Partridges to be roasted for you, or three if I had been there, well larded and of a high relish He would have added an *Hetudeau*,[4] and a Dove Coat Pigeon for each of us The Wine of Villiers taken moderately, would have made part of an honest simplicity, and necessary for preserving health But the dear Doctor is just entering my Chamber, and since he cannot at present hinder the Distemper, he is going to tell you the Remedies you must make use of for your recovery, *&c*

LETTER 129 [Works 1728 III 75]

[1] This interesting fact has been overlooked as far as I know by students of the French language and its history
Either M Le Fevre who attended Saint Evremond in his last illness or his friend Dr Sylvestre they were both licentiates of the Royal College of Physicians
[3] A corruption of Chicory
[4] An archaic term for a young capon Littre s Dictionary gives the spellings Hetoudeau or Hetourdeau

130

TO COUNT MAGALOTTI
COUNSELLOR OF STATE TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE GREAT DUKE OF TUSCANY

[1702]

How happy are you, Sir! I have had the honour to know you above these thirty years: your years have acquired you a great stock of knowledge, have gain'd you a great deal of experience, a great deal of esteem, without lessening the vigour either of your Mind or Body · mine, which are indeed more numerous, have not been so favourable to me. They have left none of the Vivacity which I had, nor the best Constitution in the world which I was blest with For the rest, Sir, I am extreamly obliged to you for writing to me in Italian If you had taken the pains to write to me in French, you would have put me to the blush, to see a stranger understand the beauty and delicacy of our Language, a great deal better than I 'Tis true, all the Nations in Europe would have had the same reason to blush, for there is none of them whose Language you do not speak more elegantly than their greatest wits can do.

I must have done you much injury in the opinion which the Marquis *Rinuccini* [1] had of your discernment · the reputation which you were pleased to give me with him, has certainly spoil'd yours. This Court is extreamly satisfied with him, his person, his behaviour, and his conversation I have found all the accomplishments in him that can be desired The

[1] Envoy Extraordinary from the Great Duke of Tuscany, to compliment the Queen [Anne] on her accession to the Throne" [March 8, 1702] [Note of Des Maizeaux] The Chevalier Giraldi and the Commandeur del Bene, who are mentioned later in the letter, were presumbly attached to Rinuccini

Cavalier *Giraldi* who is in great favour with every body here makes him acquainted with all his friends which he will stand in no need of when he pleases to appear himself his presence makes it unnecessary for any one to do him good offices

Before I make an end I beseech you, Sir to acquaint his Royal Highness with my humble acknowledgments, which I shall retain to the last moment of my life, for all the favours he has conferred upon me I owe to the liberalities of his good Florence Wine my latter years, which I have spent with tolerable easiness After you have acquitted me of this first duty, which is to me the most precious in the world you will have the goodness to assure the Commandeur *del Bene* of the esteem which I shall have for his merit all my life I will give you no new assurances of the senti ments which you inspired into me, from the very moment I had the honour to know you I shall end with giving you an account of the state I have been in this long time these six Verses which I wrote formerly,[1] will explain it to you

Far from France my life I lead
Far from plenty far from need
With my vulgar fate content
And the little Heaven hath lent

Vertue if not sour I choose
Pleasure if not wild and loose
Life I love but do not fly
At Death s approach nor fear to die

As ill as I am this day, yet I ought to wish rather than fear it but if I pass an hour without pain I reckon my self happy You know that a suspension

[1] They were written in 1685 for Ninon de Lanclos who had asked Saint Evremond what disposition his mind was in at that time and sent with the letter addressed To the Modern Leontium [*v* Letter 70] Only two of the original four verses are quoted in this letter

of pain, is the felicity of those who suffer. I find that mine is suspended when I am so happy as to entertain you.

LETTER 130 [Works, 1728 III 93]

131

TO MONSIEUR SYLVESTRE

[1703]

'Tis about ten years ago that my Lord *Montagu*, explain'd to the Duchesse *Mazarin* and me, the meaning of *Depontani*. I thought I had read all the good Authors, that speak of the customs of the Romans; but I had miss'd *Festus*,[1] who teaches me what my Lord told us, but does not explain it so well. *Depontani* were old men good for nothing, useless to publick and private persons, who were thrown from the top of the Bridge (*de ponte*) into the River. This Discourse alarm'd me. Judge you, if I ought not to be in the utmost apprehension this day·

Urget præsentia Turni [2]

I beg of my Lord *Montagu* not to put me in the number of the *Depontani*; but to contribute to preserve me in the world as long as nature will allow As for you, Doctor, who ought to take care of my old Mass, and enliven it again by your salutary Looks, how comes it that you have been so long without seeing me? If you give over your assiduity, I will take back those corpuscles, those atoms of health which I gave you.

LETTER 131 [Works, 1728 III 92]

[1] Festus, the Roman grammarian and editor of a dictionary entitled "Sexti Pompeii Festi de Verborum Significatione"
[2] Virgil *Aeneid* IX 73

132

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703]

I thought to have brought you as far as *innate Ideas*,[1] but I see you are hardly got to *Axioms* Let us lay aside Knowledge, *Solomon* the wisest man said, that Knowledge was *a nearness to the flesh* Not being able to rejoyce that of the Ladies, it is decency and good manners not to afflict and vex it If the changing of a Guinea, or a whole Guinea, could this day merit an entry into your House, I should endeavour to have that merit not on the account of money, but by my civil and gallant manner of losing it

LETTER 132 [Works 1728 III 91]

133

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703]

Monsieur *Rouvière* has obtained your good graces for two Jonquils[3] one of my age ought to make a more considerable present, wherefore I send you five I should not be in pain about favours, if I knew how to make a good use of them Pray send me word what

[1] M de Saint Evremond was then reading Mr Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding [note of Des Maizeaux] The Essay was published for the first time in 1690

[2] Presumably a protestant refugee A M La Rouviere appears in the list of officers in Lord Galway's Horse

[3] The French Court had made jonquils fashionable Two letters from Verrio the celebrated painter of ceilings are preserved in the Graham MSS [Hist MSS Comm App 7th Rep 371] anxiously enquiring of the British Ambassador in Paris the fate of the thousand jonquils he had ordered

you are to do after dinner. I signed all my Letters to the Duchesse *Mazarin*, when she and I were good friends, as *Don Quixot* did his to *Dulcinea*: *the Knight with the dismal countenance*, and she sign'd hers as *Dulcinea* did to *Don Quixot*.

LETTER 133 [Works, 1728 III 93]

134

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703.]

To acquit myself of the first obligation in our marriage, which is to serve you in your Love affairs, I am sending you some paper, made expressly for the writing of *billets-doux*. There is enough for at least two, for you must not have enough to last long.

> Ever let the Fancy range,
> Lightsome, lively, sparkling, gay,
> Be inconstant while you may,
> There's a time when none may change

Your song, which Monsieur *de Montandre* loves, says as much: *The Sweetest Harvest* &c.

Our *Prince* left your books to be returned by his first Guest, but fearing that they would go astray, I was anxious to take charge of them. At the moment they are in safety; but I had the misfortune to come upon the old man *Mazet* in *La Fontaine*,[1] and upon *The Citizens of Rheims*.[1] My curiosity has done an injury to my punctiliousness, so that you will find me a trifle irregular, perhaps, in restoring to you

[1] These are two of La Fontaine's "Contes et Nouvelles en Vers" [*v* Œuvres, 1887 IV 483 and V 60] The story of the ingenious old satyr Mazet de Lamporechio is summarized by Boccaccio, from whom La Fontaine borrowed the idea, as follows "Masetto si fa mutolo e diviene hortolano d'uno munistero di donne, lequale tutte concorrono a giacersi con lui" "Les Rémois" is based on an Arabian tale

what is yours You will pardon that along with many other more considerable faults

LETTERS 134 135 [This and the following letter are translated for the first time from Melanges Curieux Amsterdam 1726 Vol II pp 386 and 387 respectively Neither of them appears in any of the editions in French or English edited by Des Maizeaux There seems to be no reason to doubt their authenticity]

135

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703]

Marriage with you should be a six-months' contract You're a perfect stay at-home *Winter wife*, when there s a good fire, and cards, music and good company But as a *Summer wife* I leave you to some one younger Never indoors then and who knows if you have gone out to see a friend or to find a Lover! The Spaniards whose Proverbs please me exceedingly say that *Mujer y Gallina pierna quebrantada a Woman and a Hen should have a leg broken lest they stray from home*[1] If you had yours broken this Winter, your Doctor has mended it well, for in the Summer you make better use of it than others do with theirs I do not ask for an account of your visits, they are summer visits that do not interest me in the least Winter or Summer you will always deserve much I am sending you the posthumous Works of Monsieur *de Saint Real*[2] in which there

[1] A variation of the more familiar proverb La mujer y la gallina por andar se pierden aina—A woman and a hen are soon lost by gadding about

[2] i e The Abbe Cesar Vichard de Saint Real who was born at Chambery where he became acquainted with the wandering Duchesse Mazarin whom he afterwards followed into England and whose Memoirs he transcribed died in 1692 There is no copy of his posthumous works in the British Museum or the Bibliotheque Nationale

are many excellent, and, for me, many very tedious things. The chapter on *Women*, the *Sabines*, the *Lesbians*, the *Mariannas* and the rest, does not wholly satisfy me.

LETTER 135. [*v* note, Letter 134]

136

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703.]

The fine weather, the dullness of your appartment, the noise of the urchins, and a dry pavement, lead me to believe that you will not be at home. If my letter finds you there, let me know what you are going to do. It would be agreeable to visit Mrs. *Bond*.[1] You are certain there of winning a little, and of hearing the harpsichord played better than any one you can hear in England. I await your reply, and remain your Winter-husband, as accommodating in the Summer as in the Winter, as far as a husband of the '*Order of a quiet Christmas*,'[2] so to speak, can be.

LETTER 136 [*v.* note, Letter 140.]

137

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703]

I have some excellent bread, but I have no butter to-day, and I cannot provide my share of the meal.

[1] Nothing is known of Mrs Bond except what we learn from some verses of Saint Evremond [Œuvres, 1739 V 418], that she accompanied Mme Perrine on the clavichord

[2] The original of this curious expression is "l'ordre des Pacifiques des Noels", a jesting reference, presumably, to Saint Evremond's occupation of "Winter Husband" [*v* previous letter].

Monsieur *de Montandre* would willingly lay out a part of his winnings in Peaches I forget if it was to day that this little group of diners was to meet Whatever a woman's whimsies, they can never make an old man agreeable to her, and I believe that my presence can be dispensed with every where, except at the card table, at which the loser never offends so long as he is losing, his defects are re discovered after he has lost and paid

LETTER 137 [*v* note Letter 140]

138

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703]

When I play at your house I am certain to lose, though I console my self that you win a share of my losses When I play elsewhere, I am distressed that it is not you who are winning my money, and fear that you are losing your own at home Tell me if I am to be allowed to fulfill my customary duty of losing for as for "the unexpected' an expression consecrated by Madame *Mazarin*, I consider myself immune

LETTER 138 [*v* note Letter 140]

139

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703]

I am doing all I can to become young again, but cannot attain my end I dream of my school days, I return to the study of Grammar, but it is all to no purpose If *Betty* [1] in spite of her Youth wishes to

[1] Betty Mme de la Perrine s daughter ?

ake three or four years off her life, she has only to ead the *Decisions of the Academy*,[1] which are well-fitted o recall at least the idea of childhood. To speak oberly, you will find in them a thousand niceties of anguage, very useful for the person who wants to peak French correctly, and to pronounce it properly. Monsieur *de Muemont*[2] has had my other book by *Brantôme*[3] for the last eight days If you should have a hand at Ombre, worthy of us, you need only have my Messenger told '*Yes*,' in order that you should not give your self the trouble to write. A note, however, would be much better.

LETTER 139 [*v* note, Letter 140]

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[1] i e "Remarques et Decisions de l'Academie française, receuillies par M L T [Monsieur L'Abbé Paul Tallement] Paris, 1698

[2] Armand de Bourbon, Marquis de Miremont (1655–1732), who came over to England to avoid the protestant persecutions, at the invitation of his friend the Duke of York (James II) After the Revolution he lived at Brompton, where he frequently entertained William III and Saint Evremond He was a Lieutenant General and commanded "Mermons Regiments" (Miremont's Dragoons) Cf the letter which Saint Evremond wrote in April 1692 when Miremont was abroad "We miss that *Fie ! Fie !* so appropriately shutting up an antagonist, we miss that *Bon ! Bon !* which adroitly diverted us from what it was not desirable to hear Then there was that expression 'Take my word for it' that noble confidence which inspired listeners, and made it impossible to doubt those bold propositions you so generously advanced"

[3] Pierre de Bourdelles, abbé de Brantôme (1535–1614), the author of "Vie des Grands Capitaines", and "Vie des Dames galantes".

140

TO MADAME DE LA PERRINE

[1700–1703]

I am vexed that I was not to be found at home, when you did me the honour of sending there Let me know if there is any service I can do for you, and I'll come running If you are staying indoors, I shall not fail to turn up Ask what you will of a man who spends his nights as badly as you, though the cause of his sleeplessness is very different from yours May you lose yours pleasantly I am in despair that I am no longer able to deprive you of them

[The letters (Nos 136–140) to the Marquise de la Perrine are translated for the first time from Œuvres 1739 V pp 355 400 403 406 411 respectively The whole series is omitted in Giraud's edition]

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